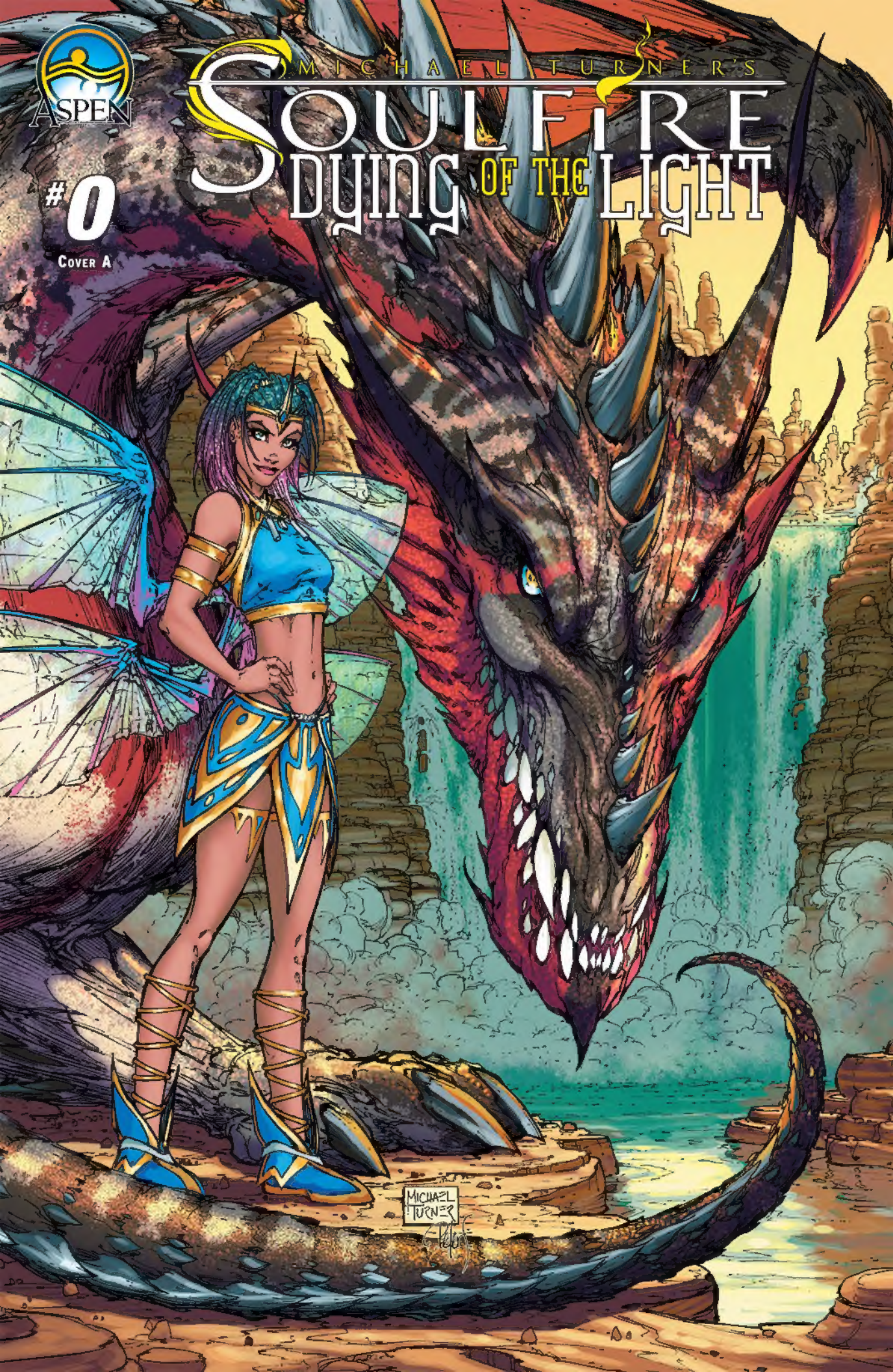




#0

COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S
SOULFIRE
DYING OF THE LIGHT



MICHAEL
TURNER

SOULFIRE™ CREATED BY



SOULFIRE™ CREATED BY:
MICHAEL TURNER



a tale of magic by

J.T. KRUL

—words

MICHAEL TURNER

—co-plot

MICAH GUNNELL

—pictures

BETH SOTELO

—colors

DREAMER DESIGN

—letters

SOULFIRE: DYING OF THE LIGHT ISSUE ZERO

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SOULFIRE: DYING OF THE LIGHT™ Vol. 1 Issue 0

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I REMEMBER THE DAYS
LEADING UP TO MY
METAMORPHOSIS.

I COULD NOT WAIT FOR MY WINGS TO
FULLY TAKE FORM, FOR MY NEW LIFE
TO BEGIN. IN THE DAYS THAT
FOLLOWED, MY MOTHER, AGLAIA,
BROUGHT ME TO THIS SAME VALLEY
FOR MY INITIAL FLIGHT. IT WAS HERE
THAT I LEARNED OF OUR HISTORY.

IN THE BEGINNING, OUR KIND LIVED ON
THE GROUND AMONG THE OTHER
CREATURES OF THE EARTH. BUT ONE
NIGHT, ANBRAEL THE FIRST SLEPT
UNDER THE STARS IN THE ASCENSION
FIELDS WITH HER BELLY PRESSED
AGAINST THE WARMTH OF THE EARTH.

THE GODS CAME DOWN FROM
THE HEAVENS AND TOUCHED
ANBRAEL UPON THE MIDDLE OF
HER BACK, AND IN DOING SO,
PASSED THEIR MAGIC DOWN TO
THE CREATURES OF THE LANDS.

FROM THAT SPOT ON
HER BACK GREW FORTH
BEAUTIFUL WINGS THAT
ALLOWED ANBRAEL TO
SOAR IN THE SKIES.

THUS THE RAHTUMI
WERE BORN.

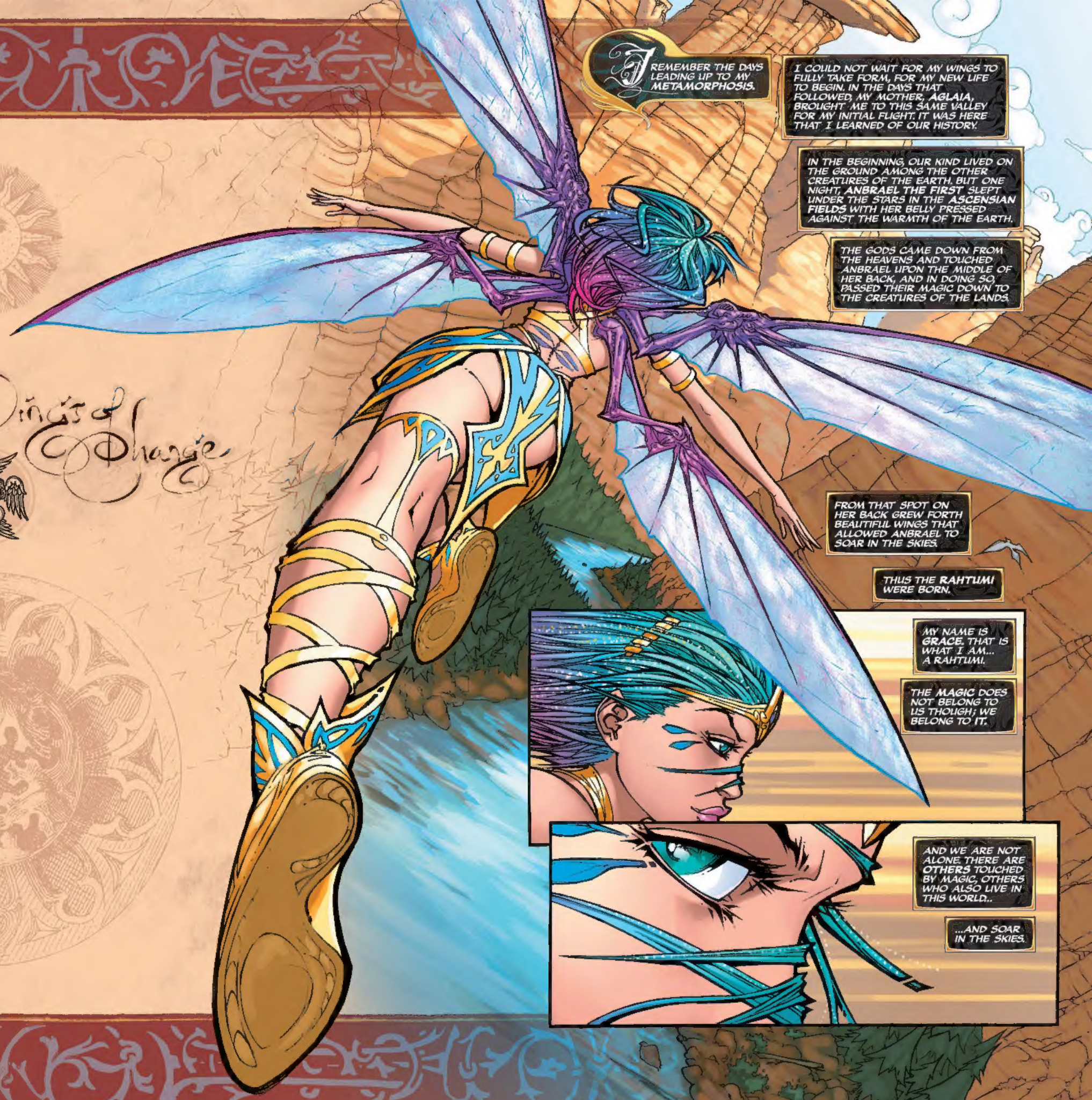
MY NAME IS
GRACE. THAT IS
WHAT I AM...
A RAHTUMI.

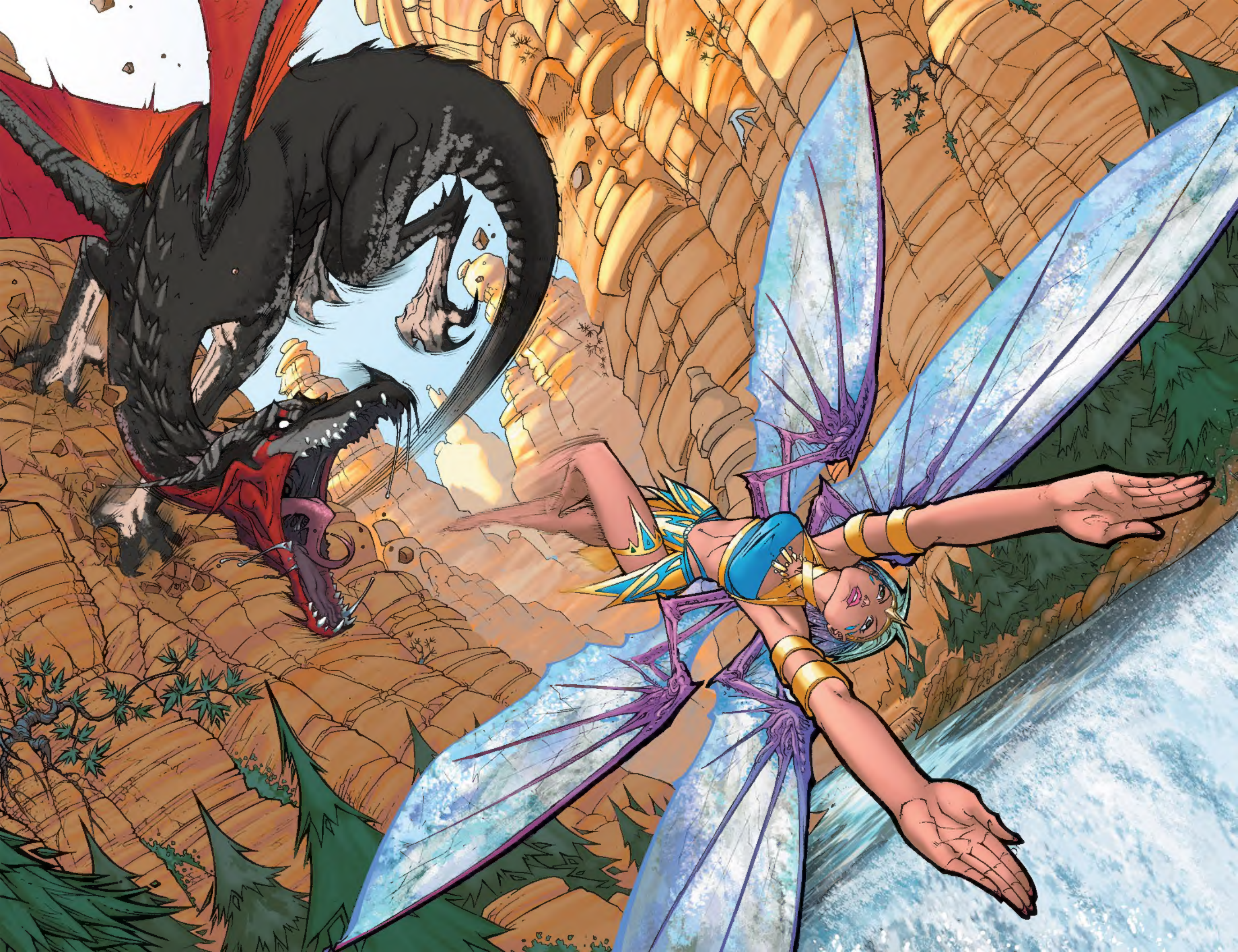
THE MAGIC DOES
NOT BELONG TO
US THOUGH; WE
BELONG TO IT.

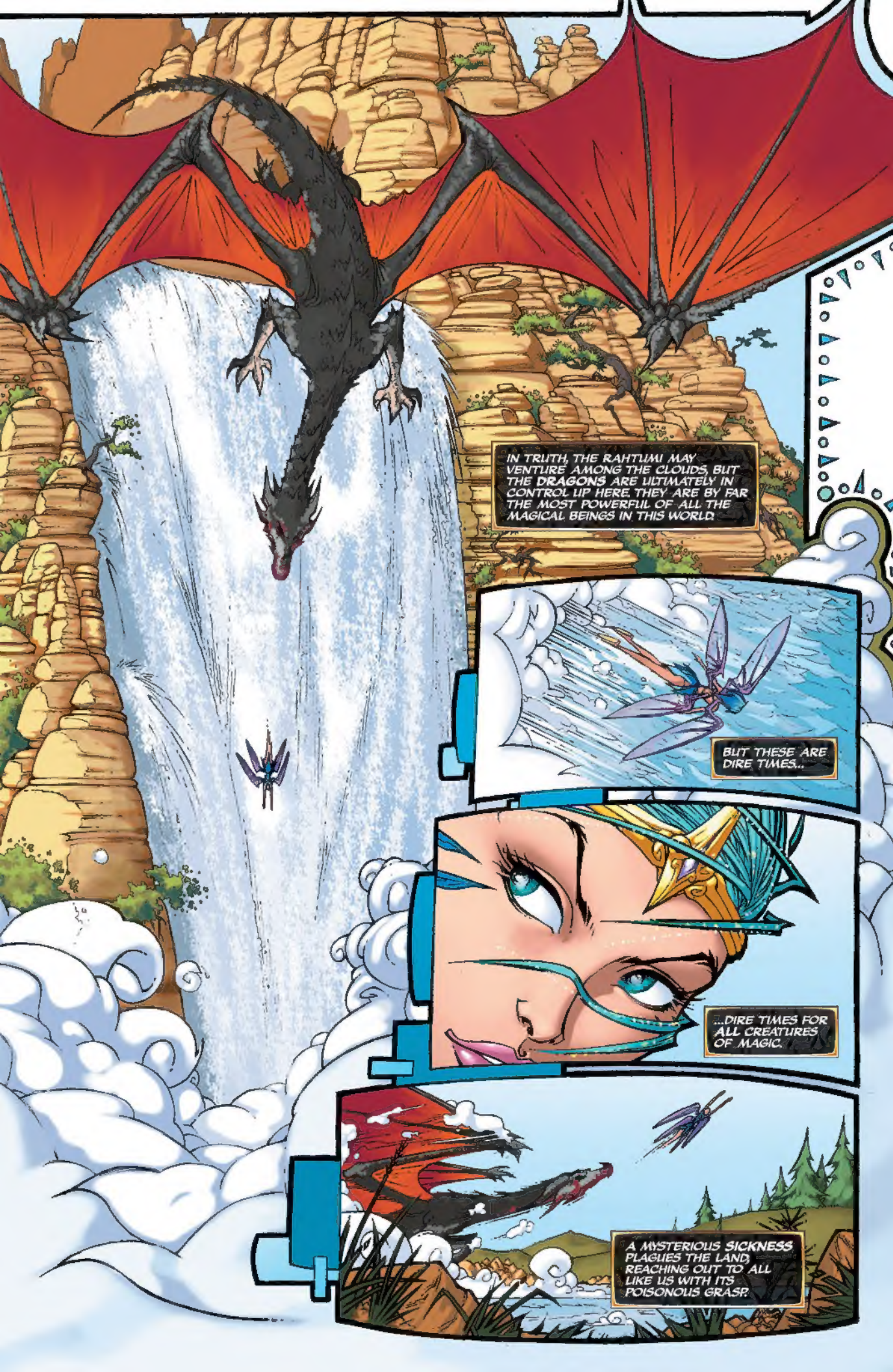
AND WE ARE NOT
ALONE. THERE ARE
OTHERS TOUCHED
BY MAGIC, OTHERS
WHO ALSO LIVE IN
THIS WORLD...

...AND SOAR
IN THE SKIES.

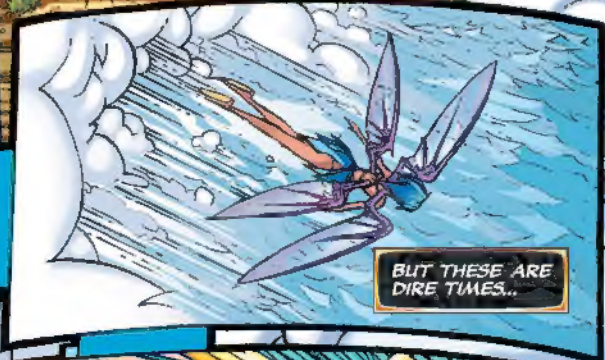
Wings of Change



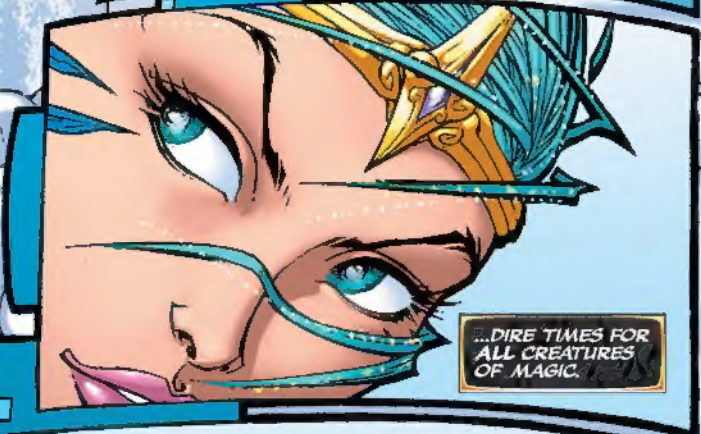




IN TRUTH, THE RAHTUMI MAY VENTURE AMONG THE CLOUDS, BUT THE DRAGONS ARE ULTIMATELY IN CONTROL UP HERE. THEY ARE BY FAR THE MOST POWERFUL OF ALL THE MAGICAL BEINGS IN THIS WORLD.



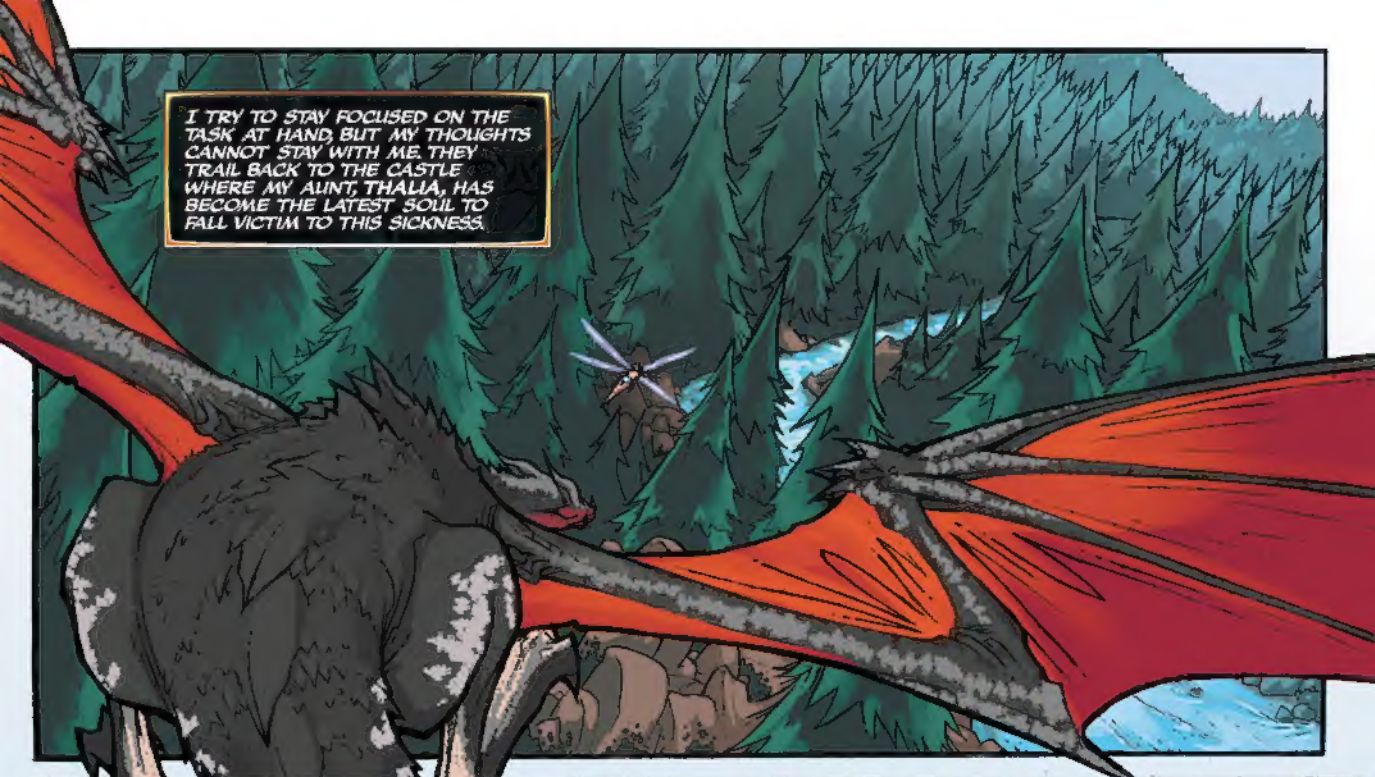
BUT THESE ARE DIRE TIMES...



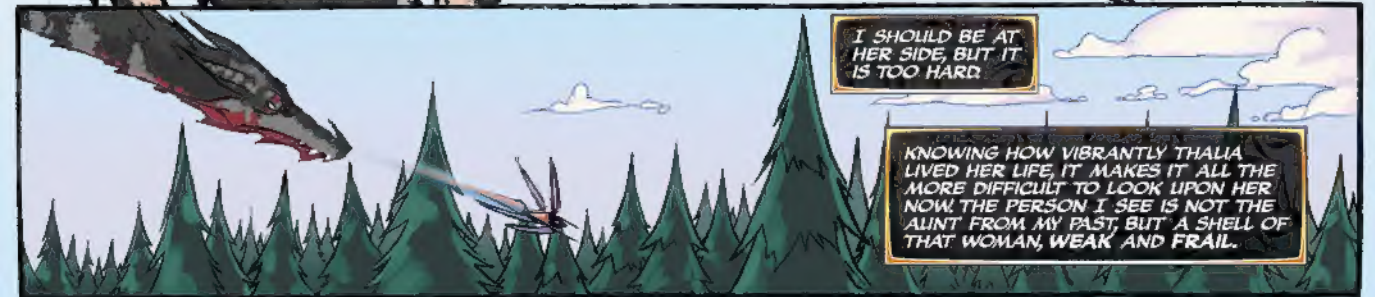
...DIRE TIMES FOR ALL CREATURES OF MAGIC.



A MYSTERIOUS SICKNESS PLAQUES THE LAND, REACHING OUT TO ALL LIKE US WITH ITS POISONOUS GRASP.



I TRY TO STAY FOCUSED ON THE TASK AT HAND, BUT MY THOUGHTS CANNOT STAY WITH ME. THEY TRAIL BACK TO THE CASTLE WHERE MY AUNT, THALIA, HAS BECOME THE LATEST SOUL TO FALL VICTIM TO THIS SICKNESS.

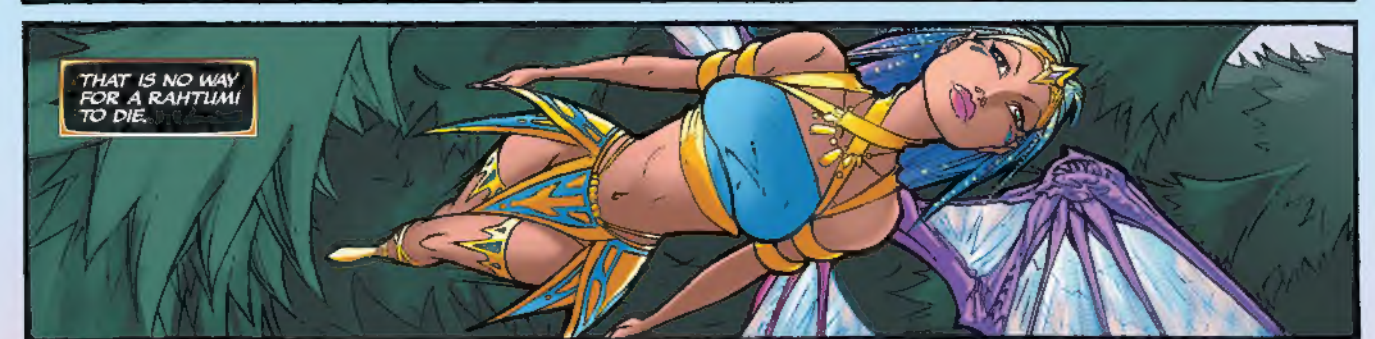


I SHOULD BE AT HER SIDE, BUT IT IS TOO HARD.

KNOWING HOW VIBRANTLY THALIA LIVED HER LIFE, IT MAKES IT ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT TO LOOK UPON HER NOW. THE PERSON I SEE IS NOT THE AUNT FROM MY PAST, BUT A SHELL OF THAT WOMAN, WEAK AND FRAIL.



SLOWLY WASTING AWAY IN A BEDCHAMBER, INCHING TOWARD DEATH, ONE BREATH AT A TIME.



THAT IS NO WAY FOR A RAHTUMI TO DIE.



MAYBE IT IS NOT MY SADNESS FOR THALIA THAT BROUGHT ME OUT HERE TODAY, BUT MY FEAR OF SUFFERING THE SAME FATE.



ONE DOES NOT
ALWAYS REALIZE HOW
PREVALENT DEATH IS
IN LIFE, UNTIL ONE IS
CONFRONTED WITH
IT DIRECTLY.



ITS GRIP CAN BE
FAST AND TIGHT.



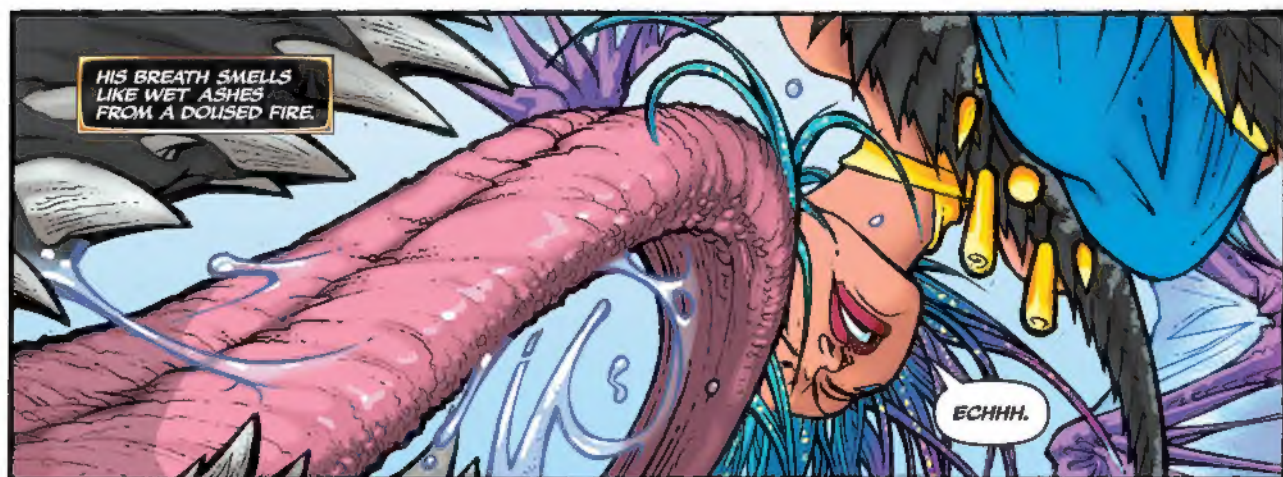
STRIKING WITH
NO CAUSE...



...WITH NO
PURPOSE...



...AND WITH
NO MERCY.



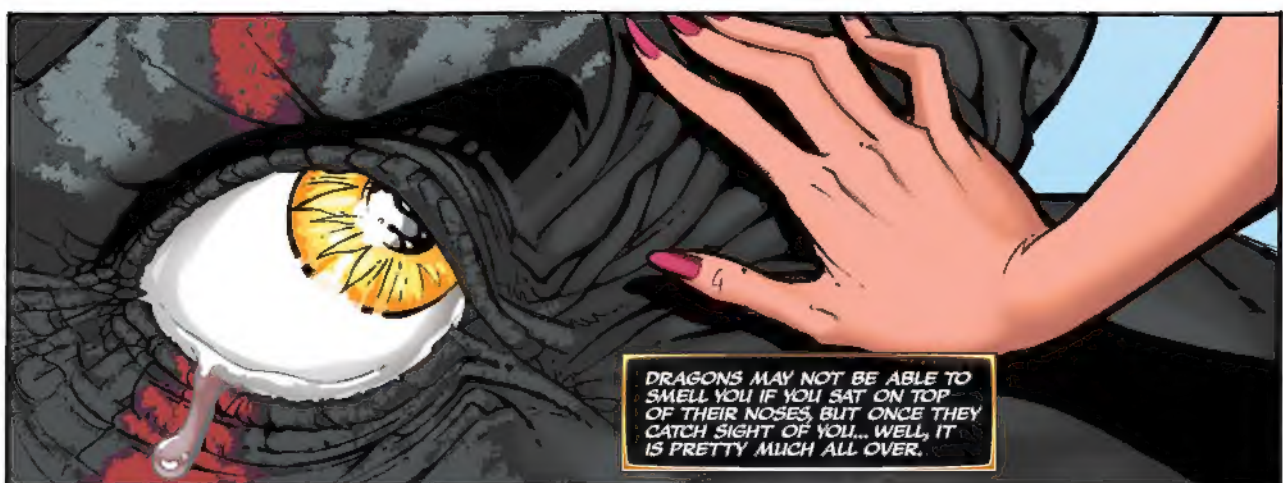
HIS BREATH SMELLS
LIKE WET ASHES
FROM A DOUSED FIRE.

ECHHH.

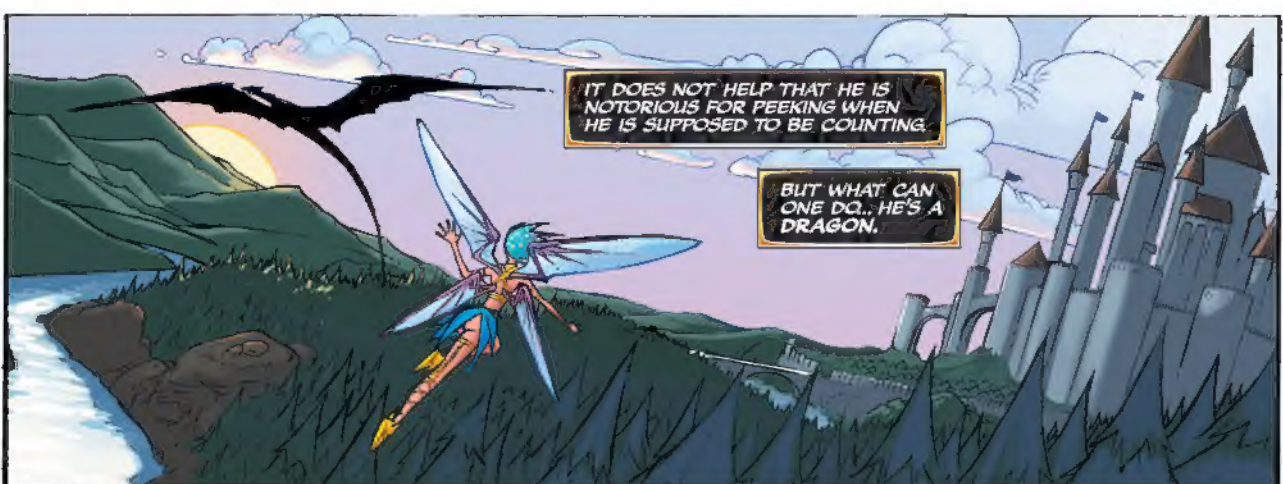


OKAY,
OKAY, YOU
GOT ME.

MOONCREST ALWAYS
WINS AT THIS GAME. HE
NEVER FAILS TO FIND ME.



DRAGONS MAY NOT BE ABLE TO
SMELL YOU IF YOU SAT ON TOP
OF THEIR NOSES, BUT ONCE THEY
CATCH SIGHT OF YOU... WELL, IT
IS PRETTY MUCH ALL OVER.



IT DOES NOT HELP THAT HE IS
NOTORIOUS FOR PEEKING WHEN
HE IS SUPPOSED TO BE COUNTING.

BUT WHAT CAN
ONE DO... HE'S A
DRAGON.



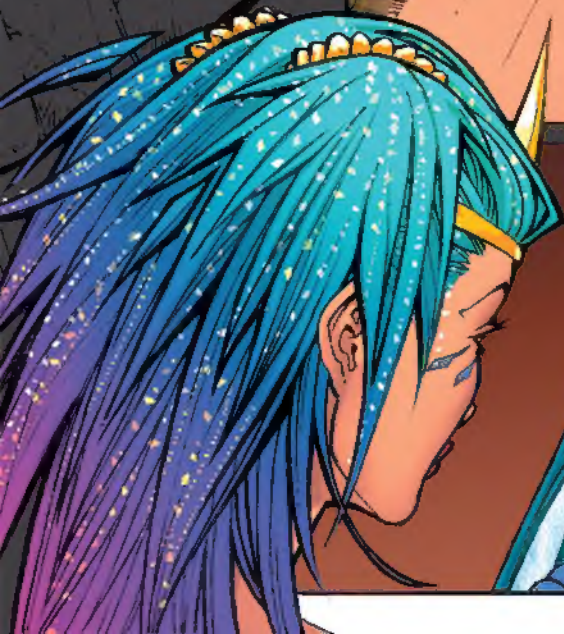
THE CASTLE RULES THE KINGDOM FROM THE SILVERTON MOUNTAINS IN THE EAST TO THE PEARL SEA IN THE WEST. IT IS CALLED EMPYREA.

I CALL IT... HOME.

THIS WAS ONCE A KINGDOM OF JOY AND PROSPERITY, BUT THE REALITY OF THALIA'S SICKNESS HANGS OVER IT LIKE A SHROUD.



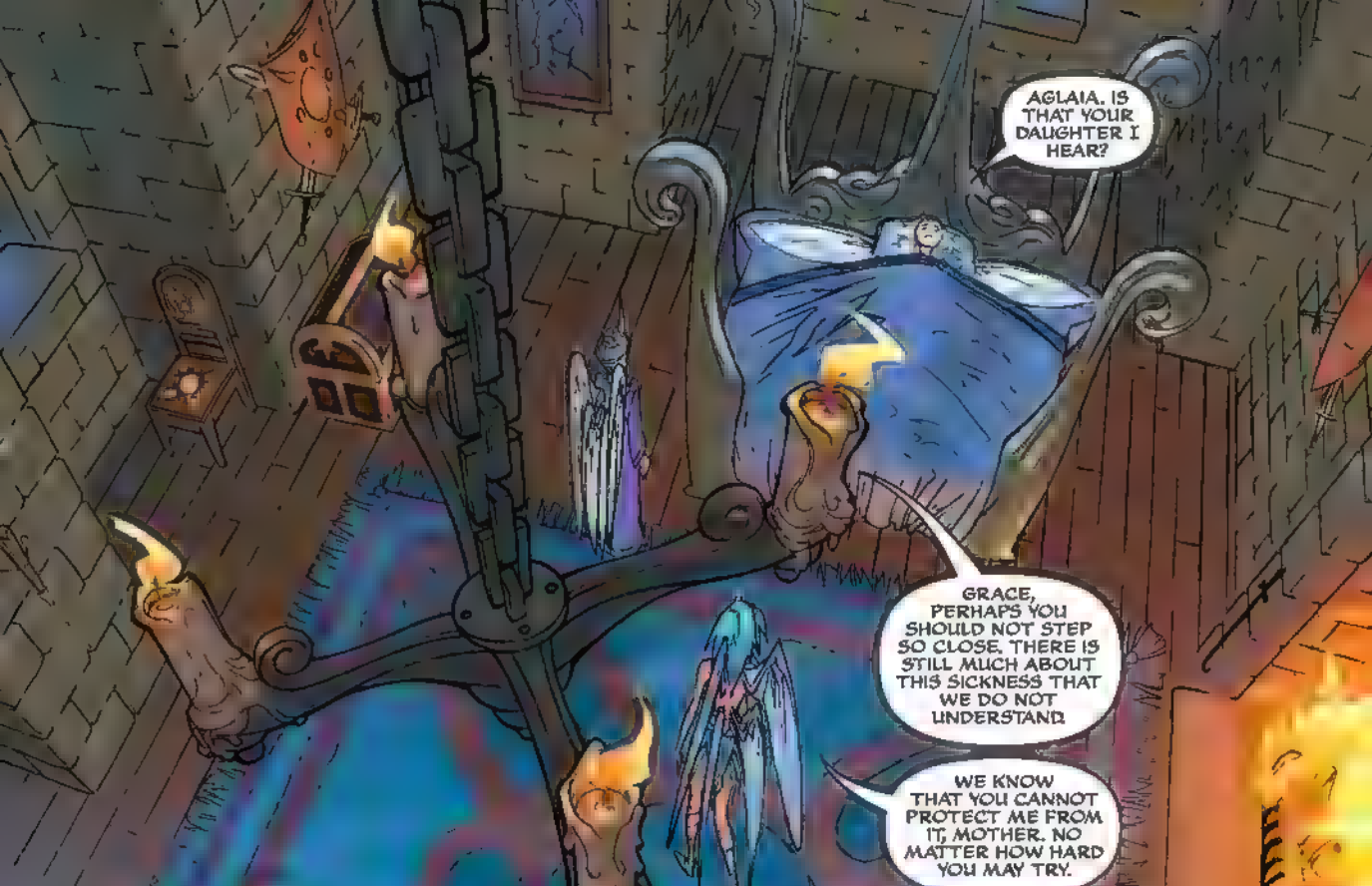
I STEEL MYSELF, PREPARING FOR THE WORST.



MOTHER, HOW IS SHE?



FOR THE MOMENT, SHE IS RESTING, BUT I DO NOT KNOW IF SHE IS BUILDING HER STRENGTH OR SLIPPING BEYOND OUR REACH ONCE AND FOR ALL.



AGLAIA, IS THAT YOUR DAUGHTER I HEAR?

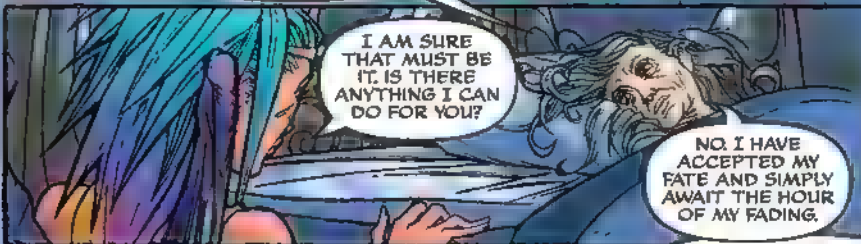
GRACE, PERHAPS YOU SHOULD NOT STEP SO CLOSE. THERE IS STILL MUCH ABOUT THIS SICKNESS THAT WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND

WE KNOW THAT YOU CANNOT PROTECT ME FROM IT, MOTHER. NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU MAY TRY.



YES, I AM HERE.

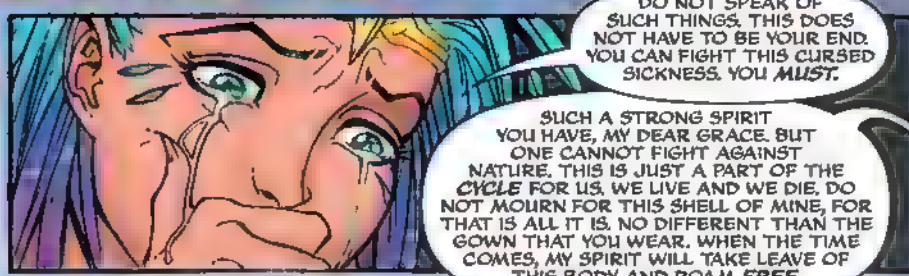
AH, GRACE, YOU GROW MORE BEAUTIFUL EVERY DAY I SEE YOU. MUST BE THE BLESSED LINEAGE YOU DESCEND FROM.



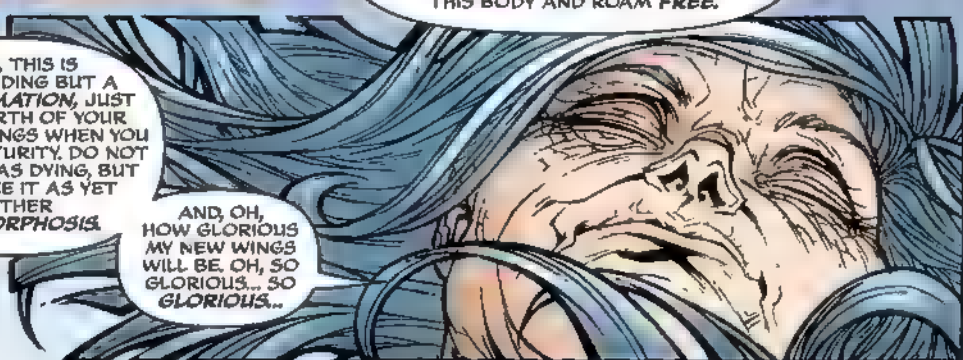
I AM SURE THAT MUST BE IT. IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO FOR YOU?

NO, I HAVE ACCEPTED MY FATE AND SIMPLY AWAIT THE HOUR OF MY FADING.

DO NOT SPEAK OF SUCH THINGS. THIS DOES NOT HAVE TO BE YOUR END. YOU CAN FIGHT THIS CURSED SICKNESS. YOU **MUST**.



SUCH A STRONG SPIRIT YOU HAVE, MY DEAR GRACE. BUT ONE CANNOT FIGHT AGAINST NATURE. THIS IS JUST A PART OF THE **CYCLE** FOR US. WE LIVE AND WE DIE. DO NOT MOURN FOR THIS SHELL OF MINE, FOR THAT IS ALL IT IS. NO DIFFERENT THAN THE GOWN THAT YOU WEAR. WHEN THE TIME COMES, MY SPIRIT WILL TAKE LEAVE OF THIS BODY AND ROAM FREE.



GRACE, THIS IS NOT AN ENDING BUT A **TRANSFORMATION**, JUST LIKE THE BIRTH OF YOUR BEAUTIFUL WINGS WHEN YOU REACHED MATURITY. DO NOT THINK OF IT AS DYING, BUT RATHER SEE IT AS YET ANOTHER **METAMORPHOSIS**.

AND, OH, HOW GLORIOUS MY NEW WINGS WILL BE. OH, SO GLORIOUS... SO GLORIOUS...



I TELL MYSELF REPEATEDLY
THAT NOT ALL WHO SUFFER
THE SICKNESS DIE. SOME DO,
BUT OTHERS LOSE THEIR
WINGS AND YET SURVIVE.

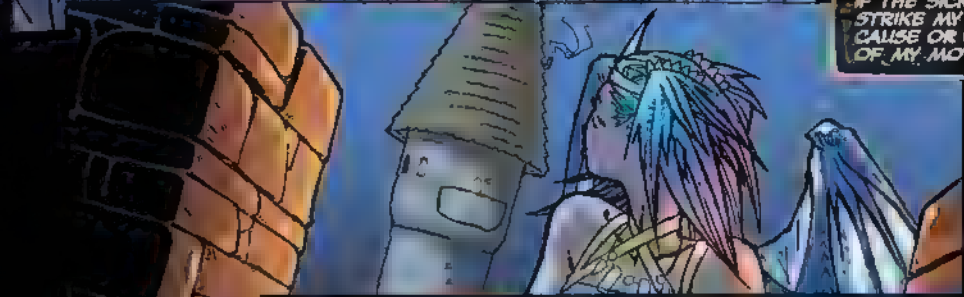
ALTHOUGH WERE I TO
LOSE MY WINGS, I AM
NOT SURE I WOULD
CALL ANYTHING AFTER
THAT SURVIVING.



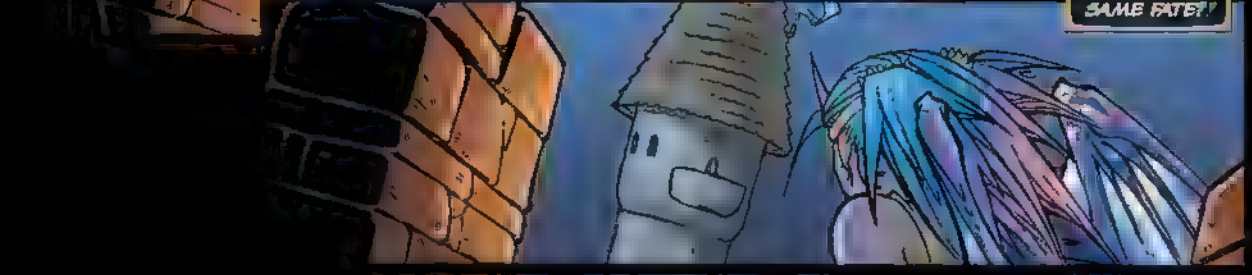
SHE WILL DIE THOUGH. SHE KNOWS THIS,
AS DO I. THE SORROW CONSUMES ME,
NOT ONLY FOR HER INEVITABLE PASSING,
BUT ALSO FOR THE STATE OF US ALL.



IF THE SICKNESS COULD SO EASILY
STRIKE MY AUNT WITHOUT ANY
CAUSE OR WARNING, THEN WHAT
OF MY MOTHER... WHAT OF ME?



WILL WE ALL
SUFFER THE
SAME FATE?



WILL WE ALL
SUFFER THE
SAME FATE?

WILL THIS BE THE
END OF US ALL?

TO BE
CONTINUED
IN

SOULFIRE
DYING OF THE LIGHT #1



MICHAEL TURNERS

SOULFIRE

DYING OF THE LIGHT

#1

OF 5
COVER A





SOUL FIRE

DYING OF THE LIGHT

#1

OF 5
COVER B



MICHAEL
TURNER

SOULFIRE™ CREATED BY



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MICHAEL TURNER



a tale of magic by

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BETH SOTELO
—colors

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—lettering

SOULFIRE: DYING OF THE LIGHT ISSUE ONE OF FIVE

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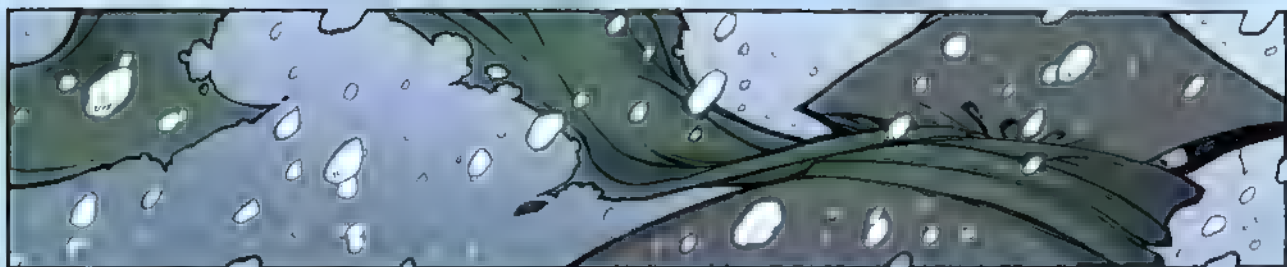
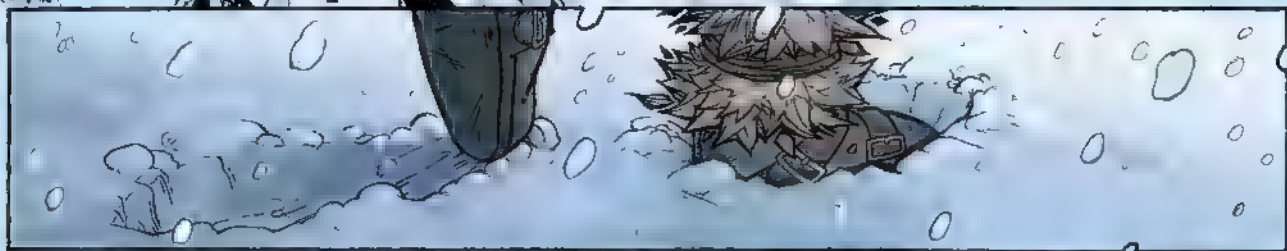
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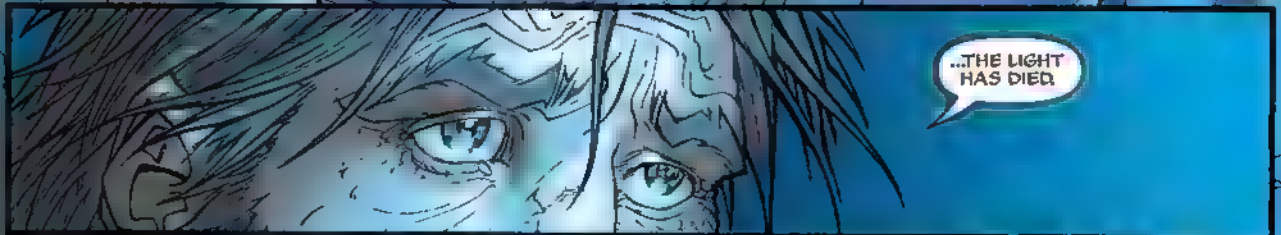
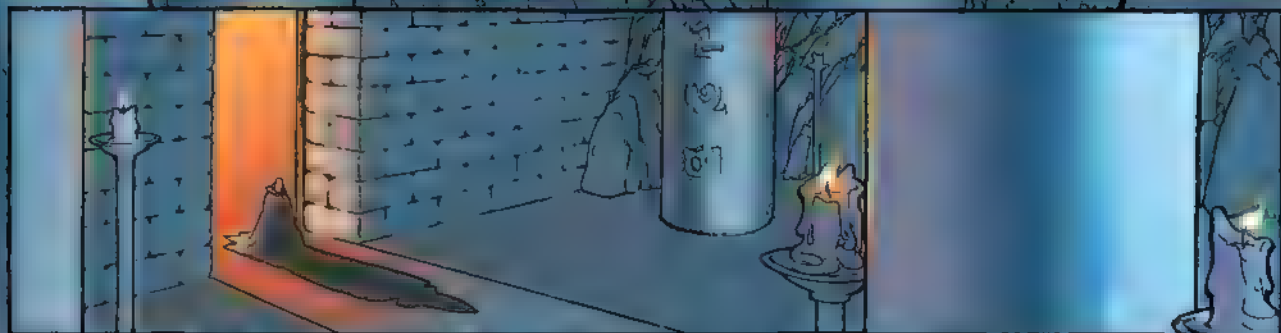
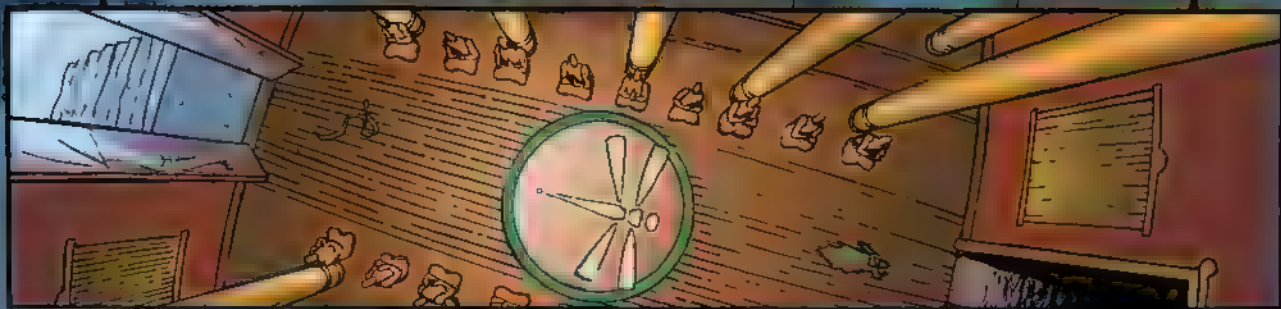
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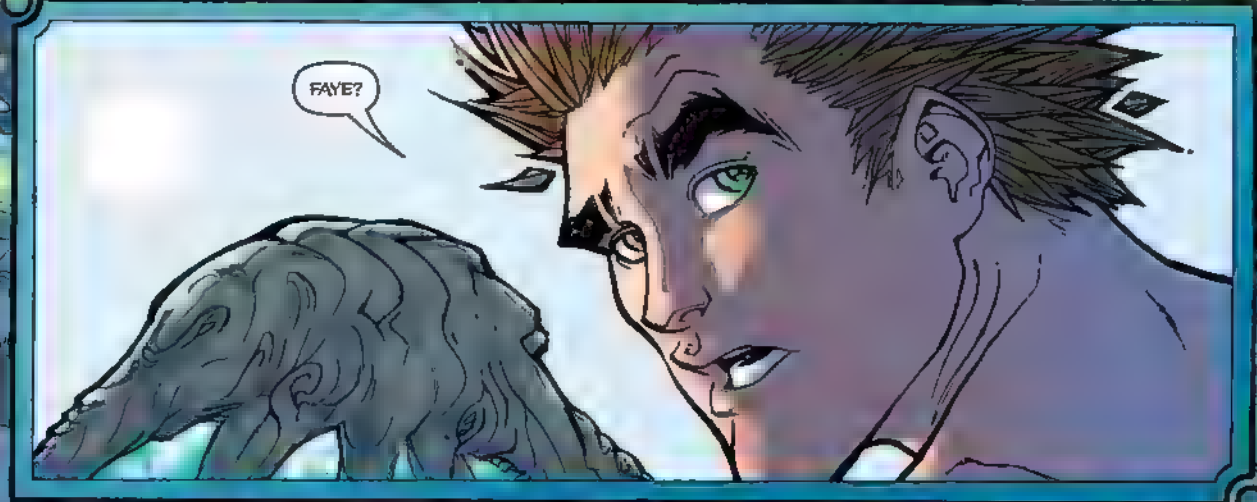
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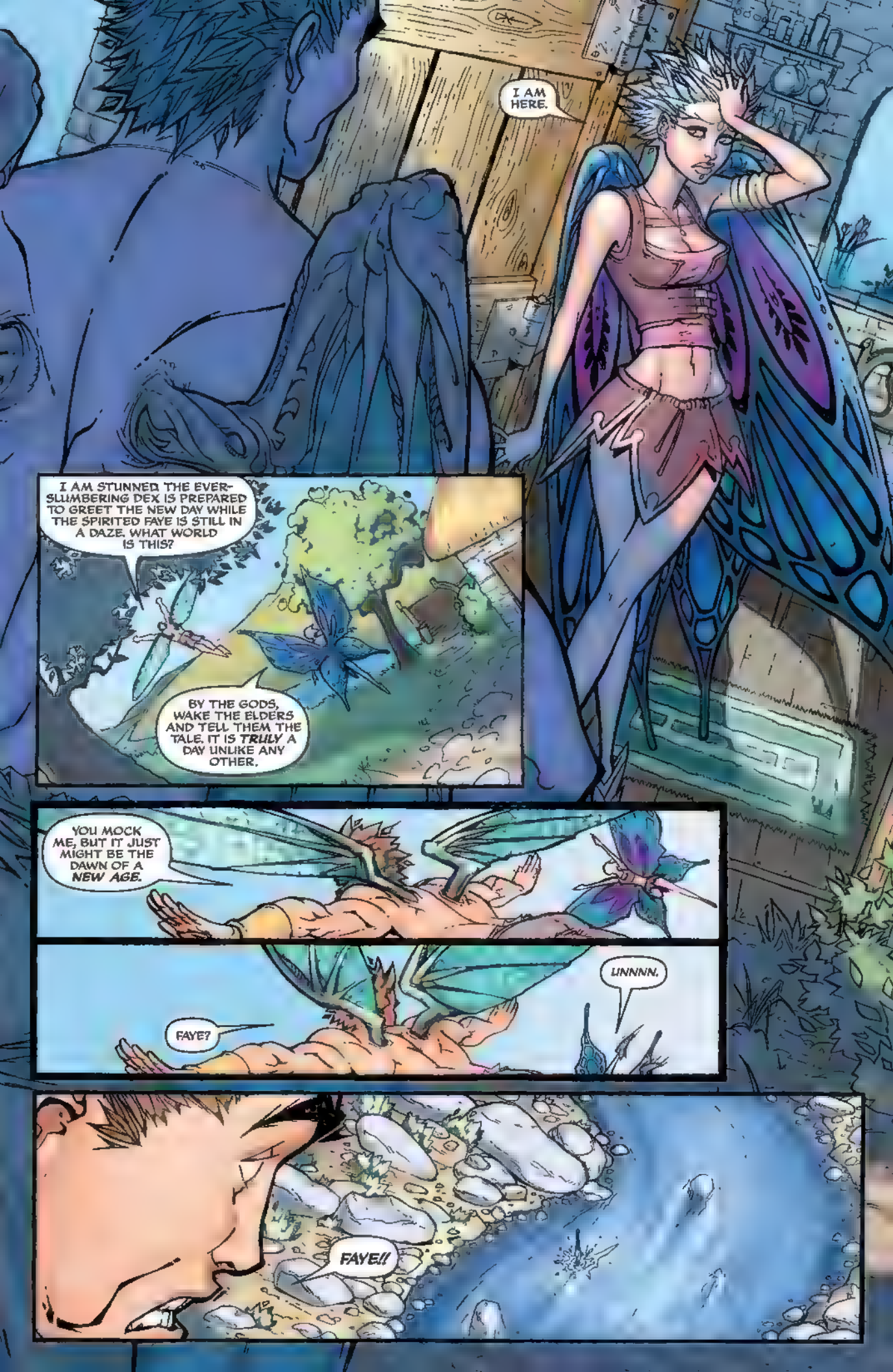
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I AM
HERE.

I AM STUNNED THE EVER-
SLIMBERING DEX IS PREPARED
TO GREET THE NEW DAY WHILE
THE SPIRITED FAYE IS STILL IN
A DAZE. WHAT WORLD
IS THIS?

BY THE GODS,
WAKE THE ELDERS
AND TELL THEM THE
TALE. IT IS TRULY A
DAY UNLIKE ANY
OTHER.

YOU MOCK
ME, BUT IT JUST
MIGHT BE THE
DAWN OF A
NEW AGE.

FAYE?

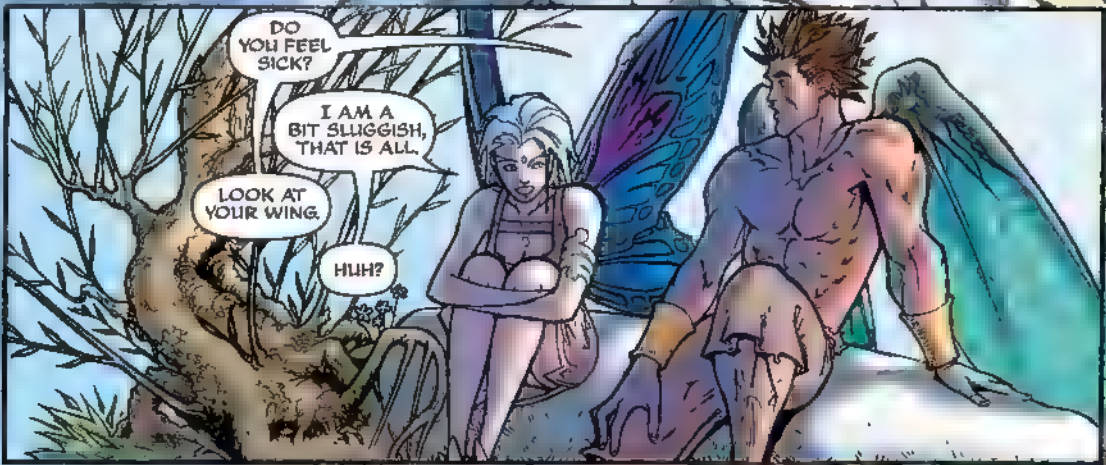
UNNNN.

FAYE!!



WHAT
HAPPENED? ARE
YOU OKAY? WERE
YOU FEELING
DIRTY?

I... I DO
NOT KNOW WHAT
HAPPENED.



DO
YOU FEEL
SICK?

I AM A
BIT SLUGGISH,
THAT IS ALL.

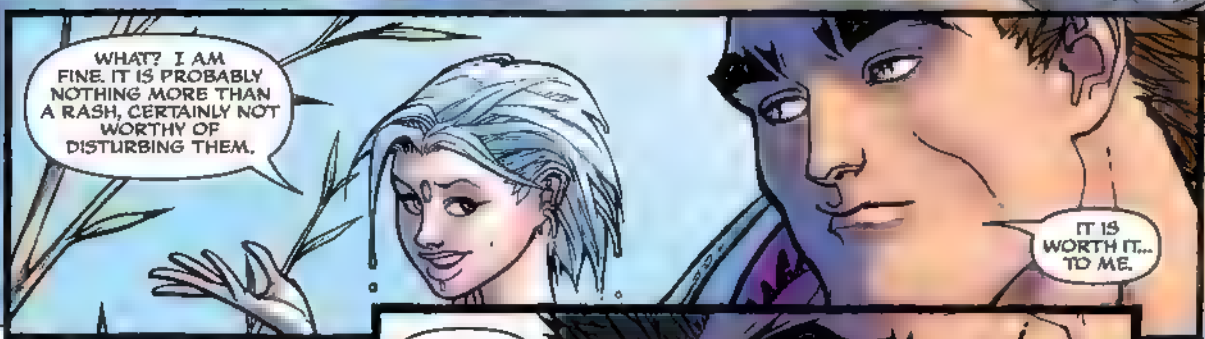
LOOK AT
YOUR WING.

HUH?



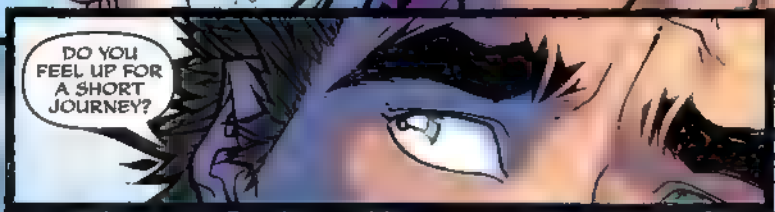
HOW ODD.
I NEVER
NOTICED THAT
BEFORE. YOU?

NO, BUT
MAYBE WE
SHOULD HAVE
YOU EXAMINED
BY THE KING'S
MAGI.



WHAT? I AM
FINE. IT IS PROBABLY
NOTHING MORE THAN
A RASH, CERTAINLY NOT
WORTHY OF
DISTURBING THEM.

IT IS
WORTH IT...
TO ME.



DO YOU
FEEL UP FOR
A SHORT
JOURNEY?



ARCADIA!

SEEMS LIKE FOREVER SINCE WE HAVE SET FOOT INSIDE THE KINGDOM WALLS.

IT WAS YOUR IDEA TO MOVE TO THE AMARANTHINE HILLS FOR A LITTLE PEACE AND QUIET.

I KNOW, BUT I CAN STILL MISS IT.

I MEAN, HOW CAN YOU NOT?

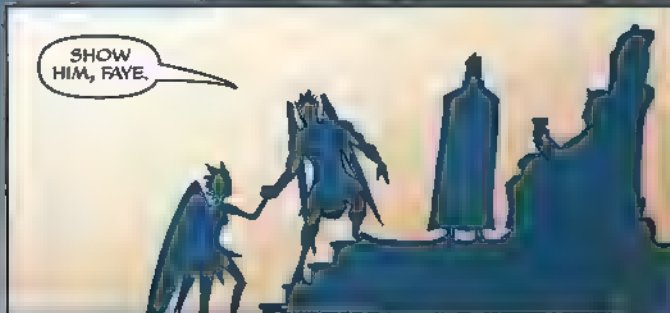
I COULD SURE GO FOR A PINT OR TWO...

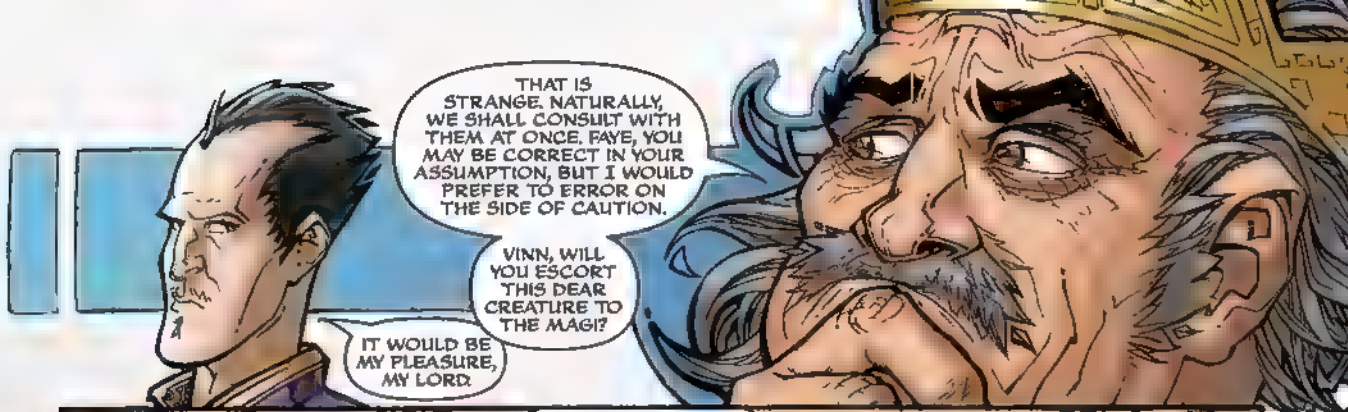
...AFTER WE HAVE TAKEN CARE OF YOU, OF COURSE.

THE DRUNKEN DRAGON

PERHAPS THAT IS WHAT I NEED— A BIT OF HOPS AND BARLEY.

IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN TO CALM MY NERVES.





THAT IS STRANGE. NATURALLY, WE SHALL CONSULT WITH THEM AT ONCE. FAYE, YOU MAY BE CORRECT IN YOUR ASSUMPTION, BUT I WOULD PREFER TO ERROR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION.

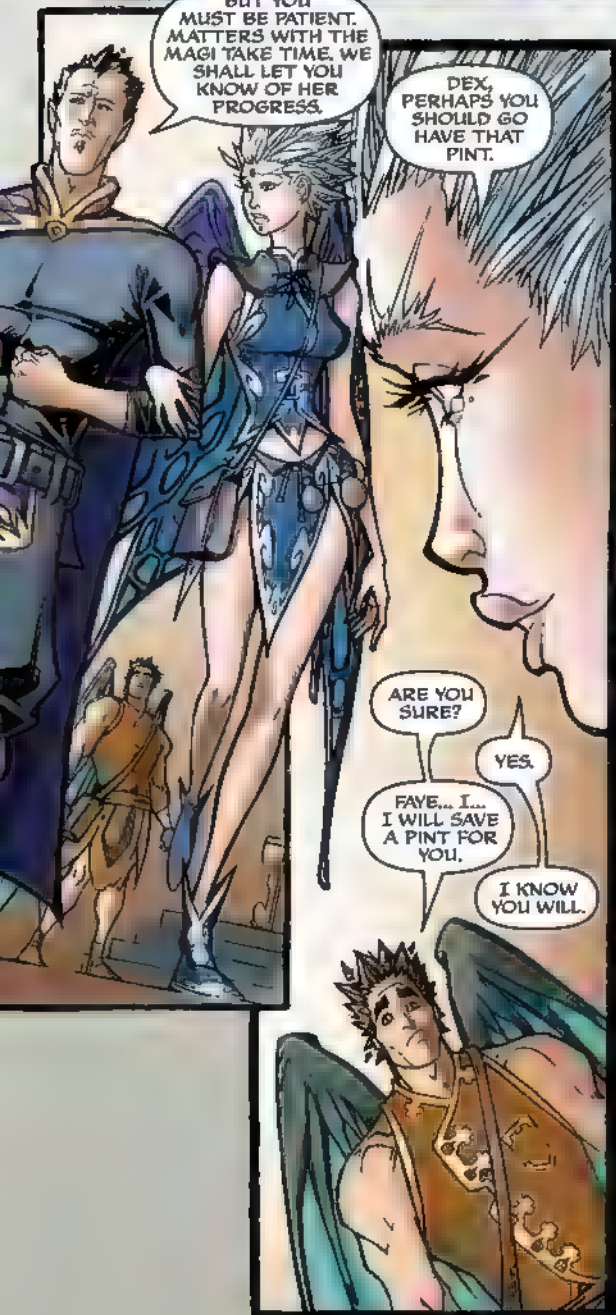
VINN, WILL YOU ESCORT THIS DEAR CREATURE TO THE MAGI?

IT WOULD BE MY PLEASURE, MY LORD.



AS OF LATE, THEY PREFER TO KEEP TO THEMSELVES IN PRIVATE MEDITATION.

DO NOT WORRY, DEX. SHE SHALL BE UNDER THE BEST OF CARE. I ASSURE YOU.



BUT YOU MUST BE PATIENT. MATTERS WITH THE MAGI TAKE TIME. WE SHALL LET YOU KNOW OF HER PROGRESS.

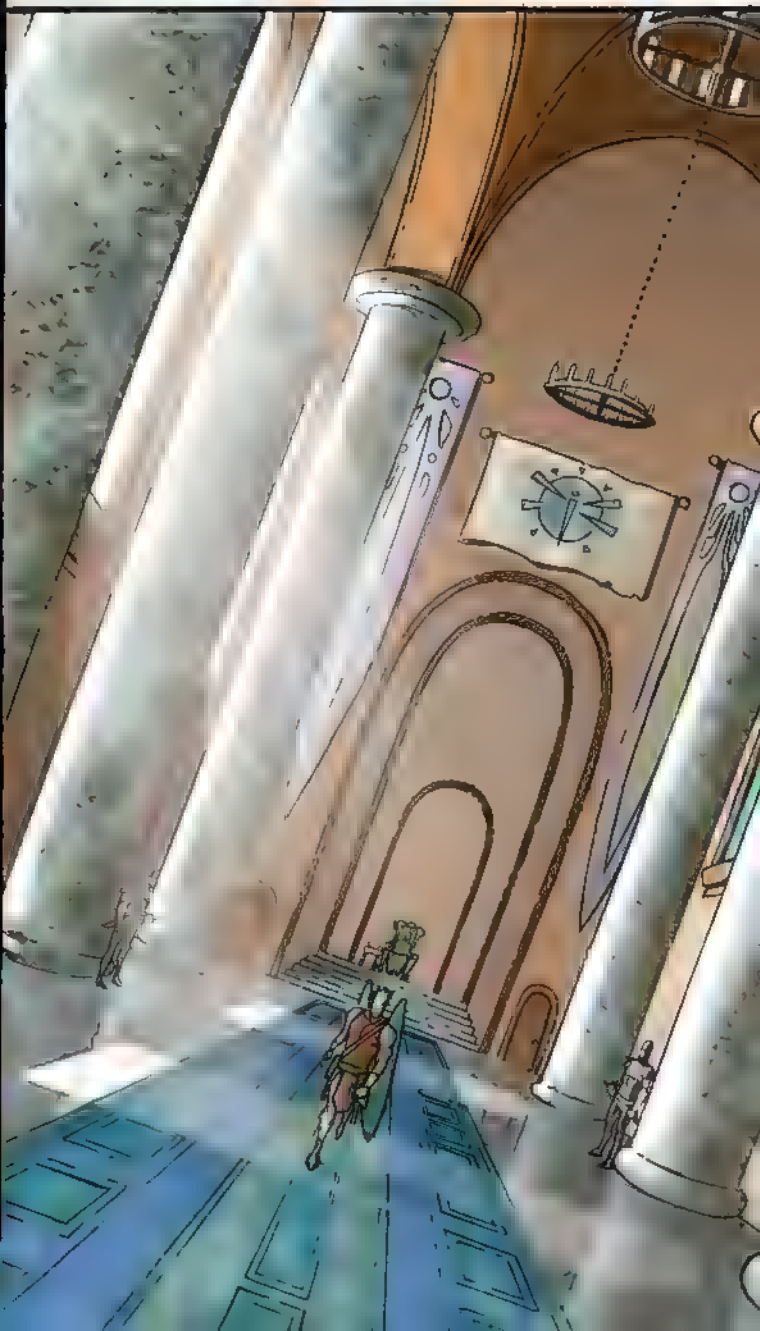
DEX, PERHAPS YOU SHOULD GO HAVE THAT PINT.

ARE YOU SURE?

YES.

FAYE... I... I WILL SAVE A PINT FOR YOU.

I KNOW YOU WILL.



SMACK

THIRTY-THREE.

SMACK

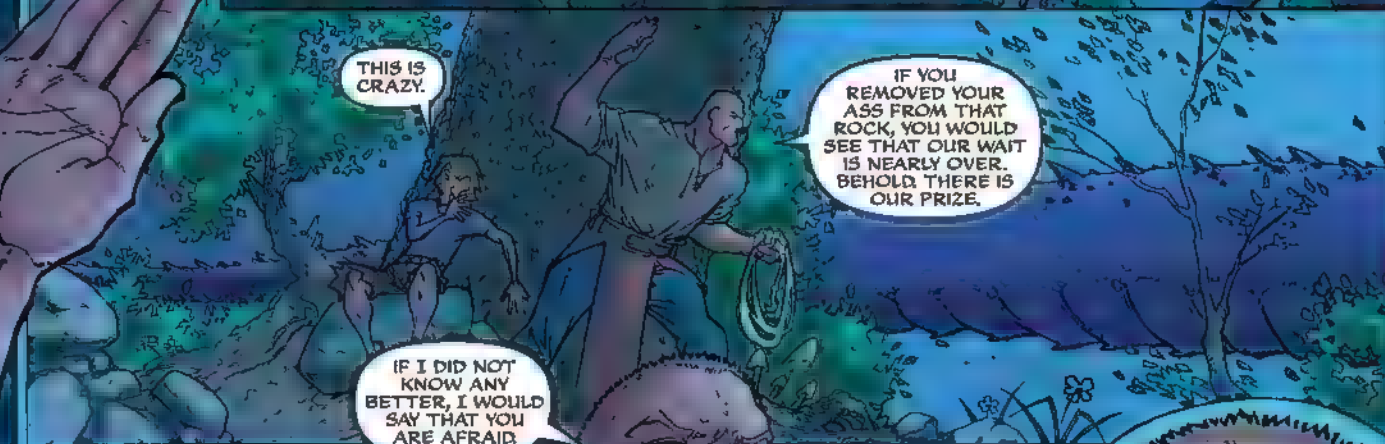
THIRTY-FOUR.



SMACK

THAT MAKES THIRTY-FIVE MUDBUGS. ARDA, HOW MANY MORE MUST I KILL BEFORE WE CAN GO HOME?

SILENCE, BADIL.



THIS IS CRAZY.

IF YOU REMOVED YOUR ASS FROM THAT ROCK, YOU WOULD SEE THAT OUR WAIT IS NEARLY OVER. BEHOLD, THERE IS OUR PRIZE.

IF I DID NOT KNOW ANY BETTER, I WOULD SAY THAT YOU ARE AFRAID.

GO AHEAD AND SAY IT. I AM. DRAGONS ARE VICIOUS AND UNCONTROLLABLE, ESPECIALLY THEM TWO-LEGGED ONES.

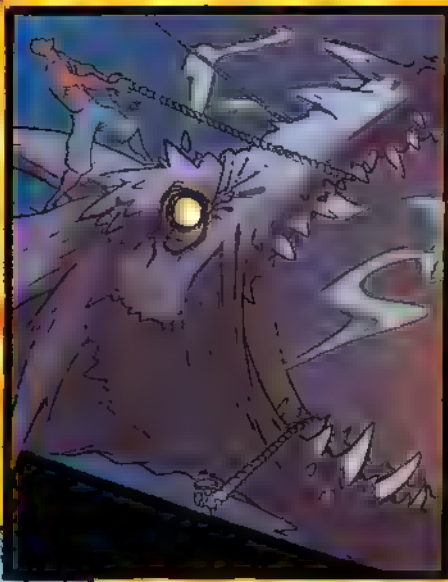
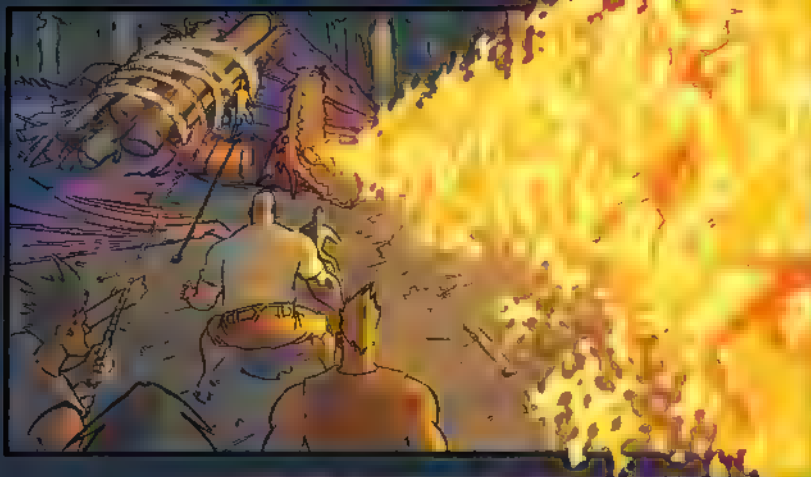
DO NOT WORRY, WE CARRY THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE.

YEAH, BUT HE CAN BREATHE FIRE.

NOW!!!



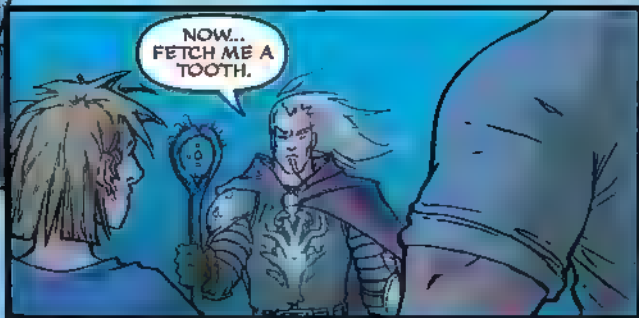
SECURE
HIS WINGS! DO
NOT LET HIM
TAKE FLIGHT!



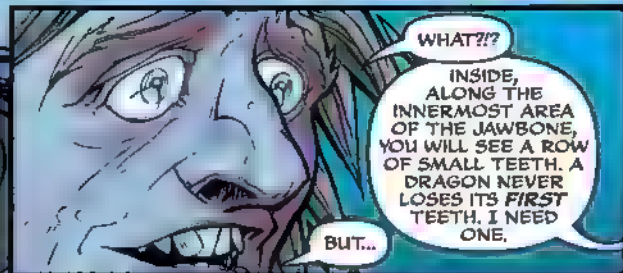


...I KNEW I WAS WISE IN PLACING MY FAITH IN YOU.

THANK YOU, RAINIER.



NOW...
FETCH ME A
TOOTH.



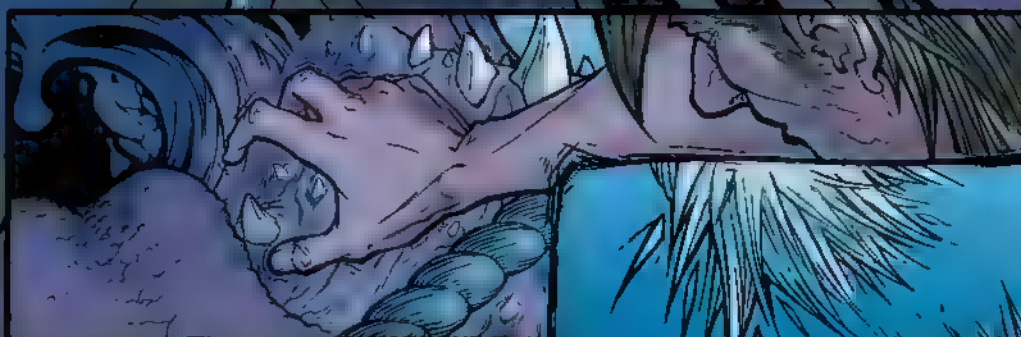
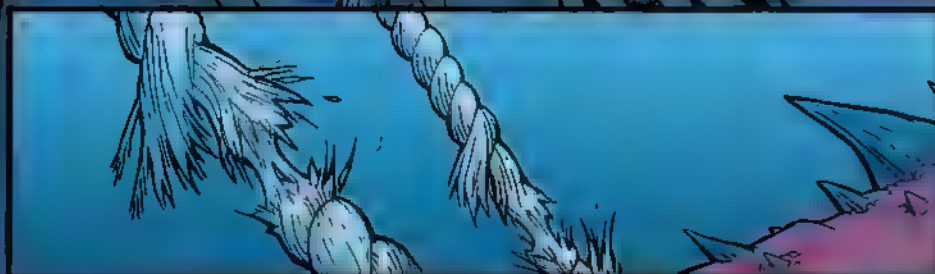
WHAT???

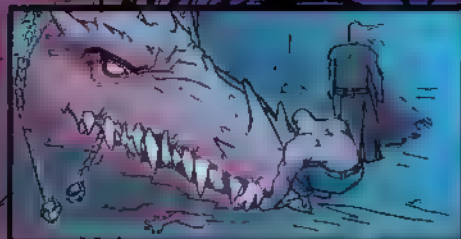
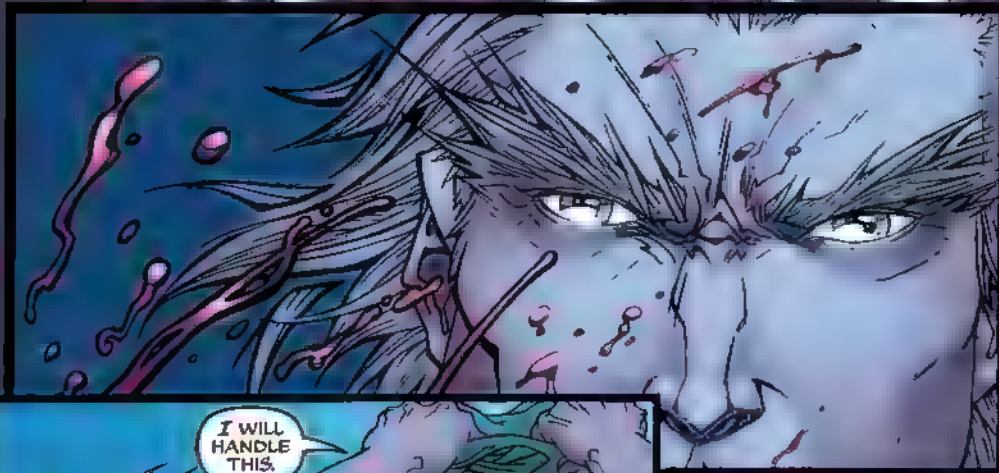
INSIDE,
ALONG THE
INNERMOST AREA
OF THE JAWBONE,
YOU WILL SEE A ROW
OF SMALL TEETH. A
DRAGON NEVER
LOSES ITS *FIRST*
TEETH. I NEED
ONE.

BUT...

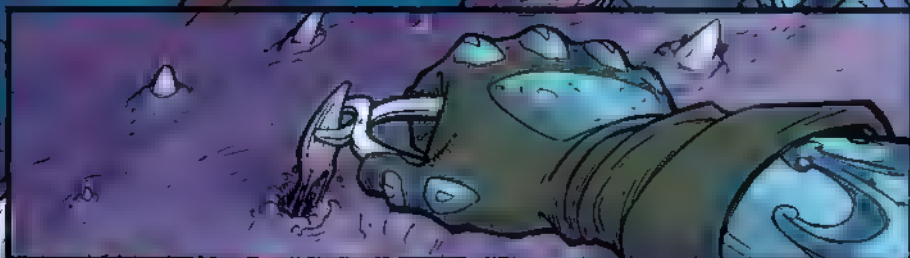


NOW!





UNH... THE
WAY IS... UNH...
CLEAR, MY
LORD.





YOU MAY
RELEASE THE
DRAGON
NOW.

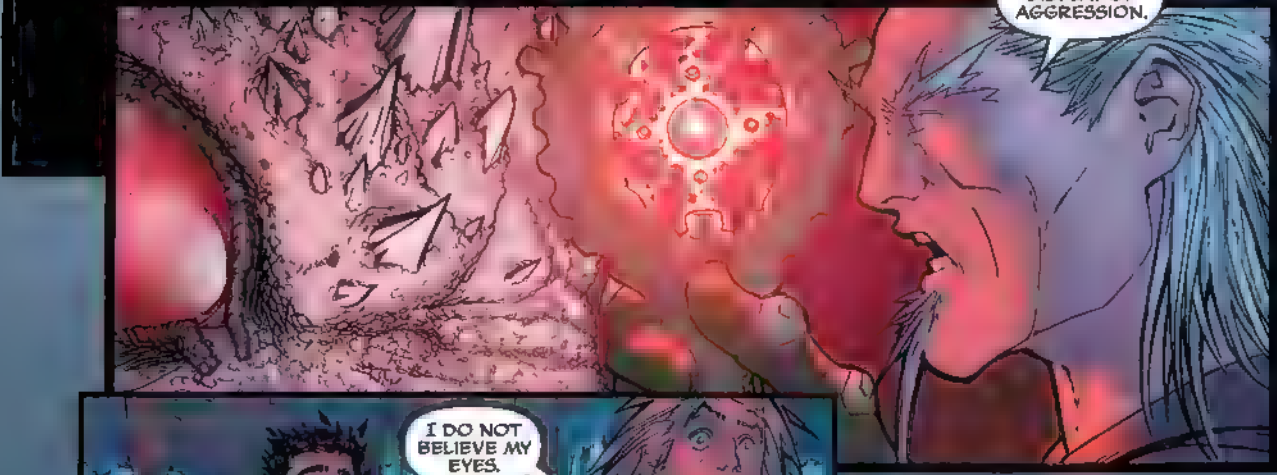
WHAT???

HE WILL
TEAR US TO
PIECES!

I SAID
RELEASE
HIM!

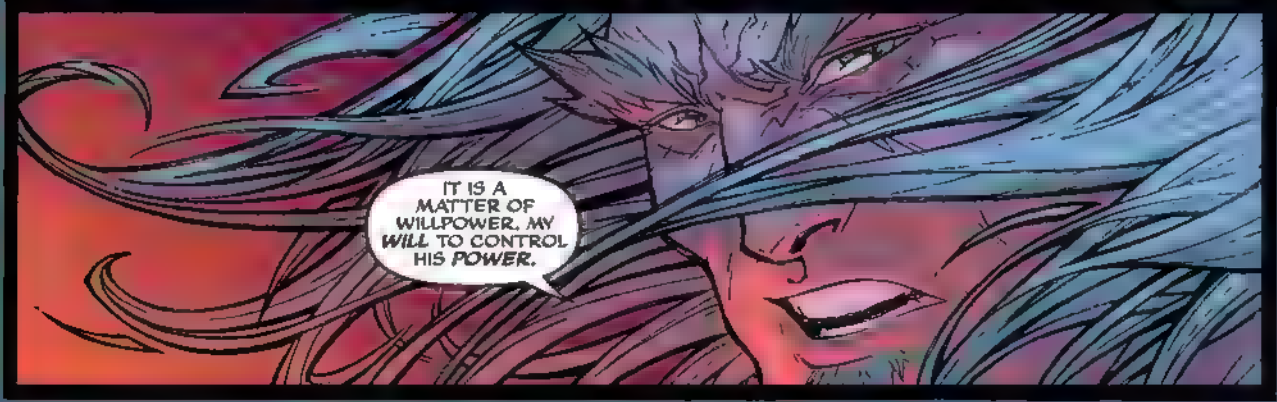


CEASE
THIS USELESS
DISPLAY OF
AGGRESSION.



I DO NOT
BELIEVE MY
EYES.

HOW IS THAT
POSSIBLE?



IT IS A
MATTER OF
WILLPOWER. MY
WILL TO CONTROL
HIS POWER.

"MATTERS WITH THE MAGI TAKE TIME," HE SAYS...

HE WAS NOT KIDDING. I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR THREE DAYS. THREE DAYS SINCE I HAVE SEEN FAYE.



UH-HUH.



CONSIDER YOURSELF LUCKY...

...MY TROY HAS BEEN INSIDE THE PALACE FOR MORE THAN EIGHT DAYS. EACH DAY I TRY TO SEE HIM, AND EACH DAY I AM TURNED AWAY.

IS TROY... IS HE SICK?

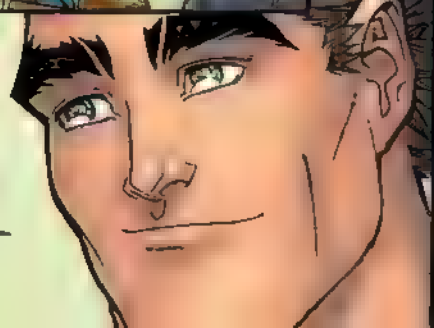
YES, BUT HIS ILLNESS IS ELUSIVE, LIKE A VAGUE WEAKENING THAT STRIKES THEN SUBSIDES.

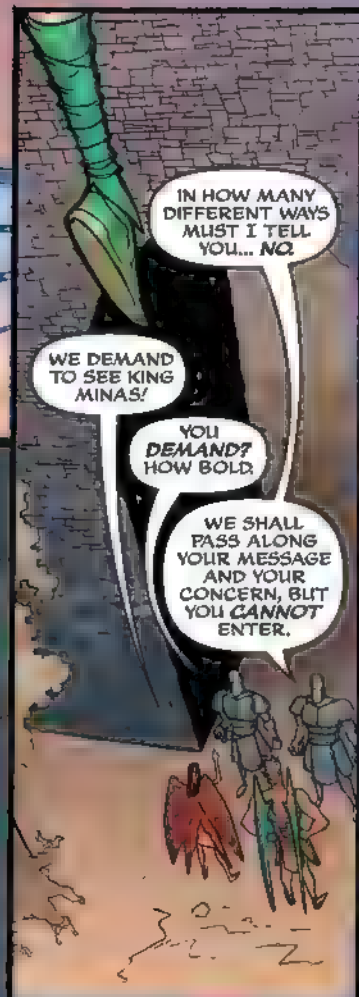
SOUNDS FAMILIAR.

TELL ME...

NALA.

NALA... HAVE YOU TRIED YET TODAY?





IN HOW MANY
DIFFERENT WAYS
MUST I TELL
YOU... NO.

WE DEMAND
TO SEE KING
MINAS!

YOU
DEMAND?
HOW BOLD.

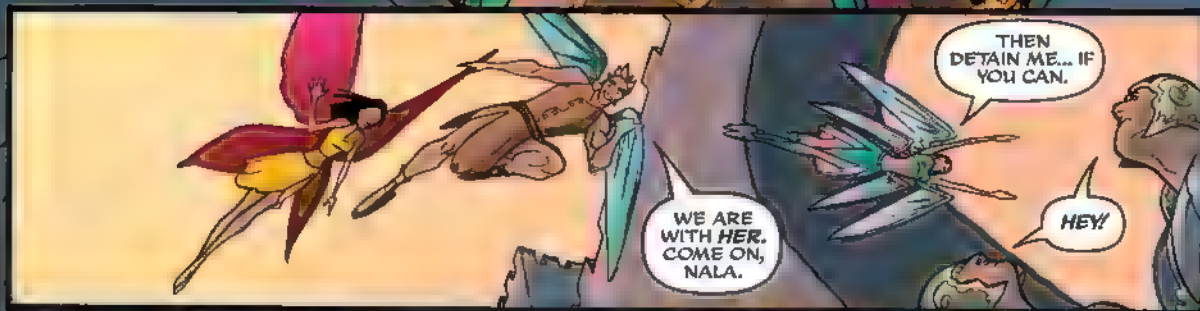
WE SHALL
PASS ALONG
YOUR MESSAGE
AND YOUR
CONCERN, BUT
YOU CANNOT
ENTER.



STEP ASIDE.
I MUST SEE
KING MINAS.

GRACE OF
EMPYREA...

MY APOLOGIES,
GRACE, BUT WE
HAVE OUR ORDERS.
NO ONE IS ALLOWED
ENTRANCE TODAY.



THEN
DETAIN ME... IF
YOU CAN.

WE ARE
WITH HER.
COME ON,
NALA.

HEY!



AH, MY DEAR GRACE, WHAT AN UNEXPECTED SURPRISE. I KNOW THE KING WOULD LOVE TO SPEAK WITH YOU, IF HE WAS AVAILABLE THAT IS.

I DO NOT HAVE TIME FOR YOUR POLITICKING, CHANCELLOR. EMPYREA IS DYING. A SICKNESS PLAGUES THE KINGDOM, ERODING THE MAGIC WITHIN US.

GRACE, TWO OF OUR FRIENDS ARE SICK AS WELL. BOTH CAME HERE FOR HELP FROM THE KING'S MAGI, BUT VINN WILL NOT LET US SEE THEM.

IS THIS TRUE?

THE MAGI ARE DOING *EVERYTHING* IN THEIR POWERS TO HELP THEM AND ALL OF THE KING'S PEOPLE INCLUDING THOSE IN EMPYREA. BUT THEY REQUIRE THE UTMOST PRIVACY. SURELY, YOU UNDERSTAND.

WHAT I UNDERSTAND IS THAT I MUST RETURN TO EMPYREA WITH THE CURE FOR THIS MYSTERIOUS SICKNESS BEFORE MORE OF OUR PEOPLE FALL.

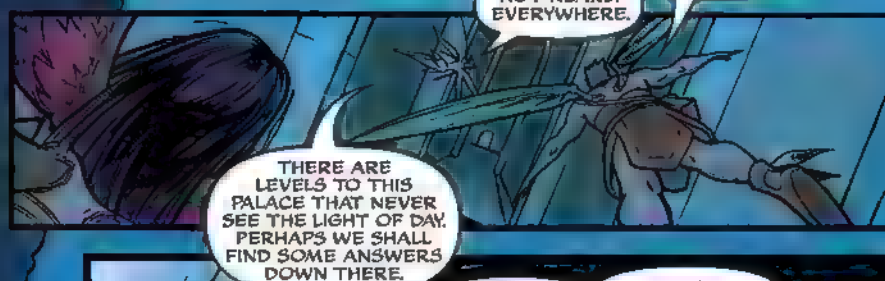
A NOBLE QUEST THAT I SHALL INFORM THE KING OF... AS SOON AS THE MOMENT PRESENTS ITSELF.

BUT IN THE MEANTIME...

...LIKE THE GUARD SAID, WE ALL HAVE OUR ORDERS.

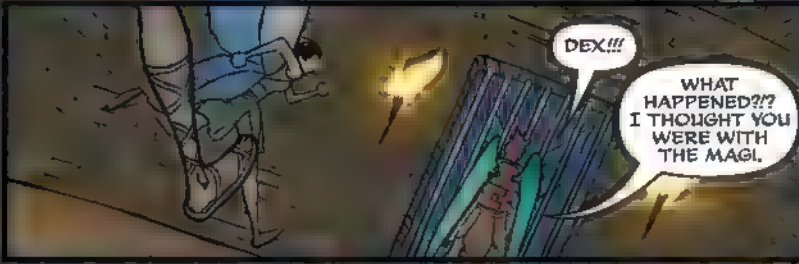
VINN, ONE DAY I HOPE YOU REMEMBER THAT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN *ORDERS* AND *DUTY*.

I SHALL RETURN TOMORROW. FOR *YOUR* SAKE, LET THAT BE THE DAY.



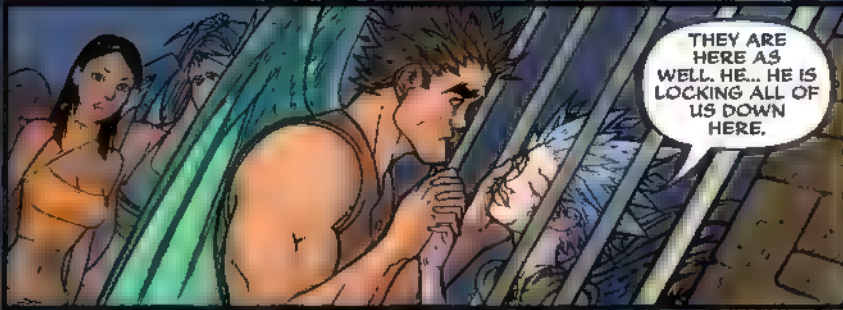


FAYE???



DEX!!!

WHAT
HAPPENED???
I THOUGHT YOU
WERE WITH
THE MAGI.



THEY ARE
HERE AS
WELL. HE... HE IS
LOCKING ALL OF
US DOWN
HERE.

WHO? WHO
DID THIS?



IT WAS
VINN!

TO BE
CONTINUED
IN
SOULFIRE #2
DYING OF THE LIGHT



#2

OF 5

COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE DYING OF THE LIGHT



MICHAEL
TURNER

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SOULFIRE™ CREATED BY:
MICHAEL TURNER



a tale of magic by

J.T. KRUL
words
MICHAEL TURNER
—co-plot

MICAH GUNNELL
pictures

BETH SOTELO
—colors

DREAMER DESIGN
—lettering

SOULFIRE: DYING OF THE LIGHT ISSUE TWO OF FIVE

Digital Editors: FRANK MASTROMAURO, VINCE HERNANDEZ | Design and Production: JOSH REED, MARK ROSLAN, PETER STEIGERWALD | Lettering font designed by: DREAMER DESIGN

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*M*Y NEW FRIENDS ARE ABLE TO ENJOY THEIR SMALL VICTORY, HAVING FOUND THEIR LOVED ONES. I CANNOT. I CAME HERE LOOKING FOR HELP IN SAVING MY KINGDOM.

I WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU, TROY.

VINN IS LUCKY HE IS NOT BEFORE ME NOW; OTHERWISE, I MAY BE INCLINED TO SWING MY AXE AGAIN... AT HIS HEAD

INSTEAD I FIND ONLY MORE IN NEED OF SAVING.

THEY HAVE BEEN THAT WAY EVER SINCE VINN BROUGHT THEM HERE.

EVEN THE **MAGI** ARE AT A LOSS WITH REGARD TO THIS PLAGUE. NOW THEY SIT LIKE THAT DAY IN AND DAY OUT, MUTTERING IN TOTAL FAILURE.

BUT **EMPYREA** IS WROUGHT WITH THIS SICKNESS. THERE **MUST** BE AN ANSWER.

IF THERE IS, THEY DO NOT HAVE IT. BUT... ANOTHER MIGHT.

EYRON, THE DRAGON ON THE MOUNTAIN. HE IS THE MOST POWERFUL MAGICAL CREATURE IN EXISTENCE. IF ANYONE HOLDS THE KEY TO SOLVING THIS MYSTERY, IT IS HIM.

THAT'S YOUR SOLUTION—TRACKING DOWN SOME CREATURE OF LEGEND. THE DRAGON ON THE MOUNTAIN IS NOTHING BUT A **MYTH**.

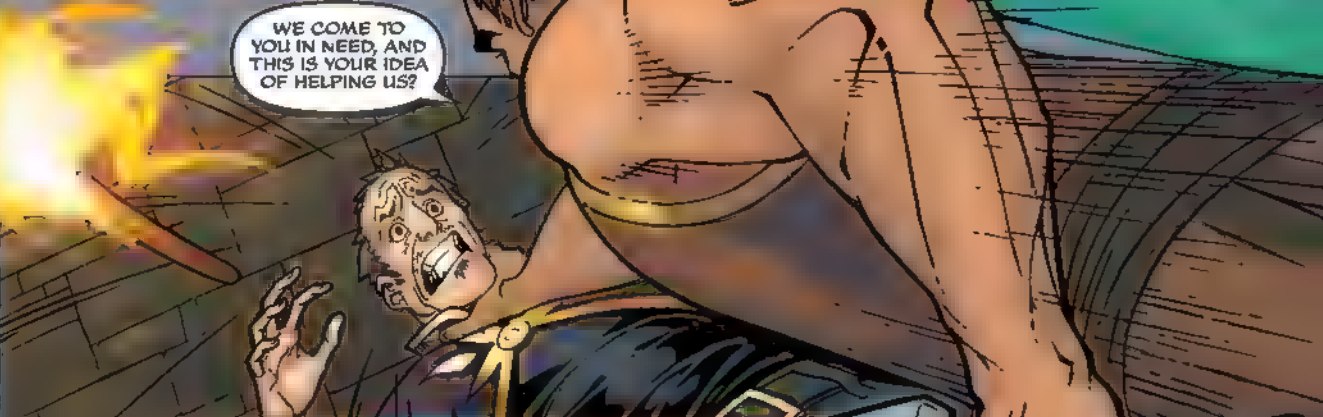
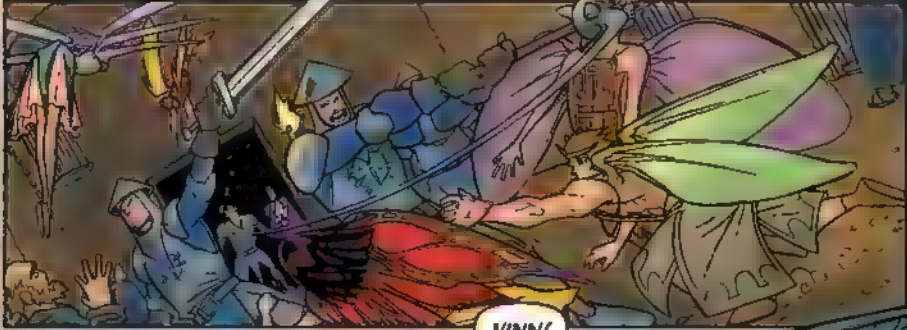
HE IS AS REAL AS WE ARE, AND I KNOW THE WAY. IF YOU TRULY WANT THIS NIGHTMARE TO BE OVER, YOU WILL HAVE TO HAVE A LITTLE **FAITH**.

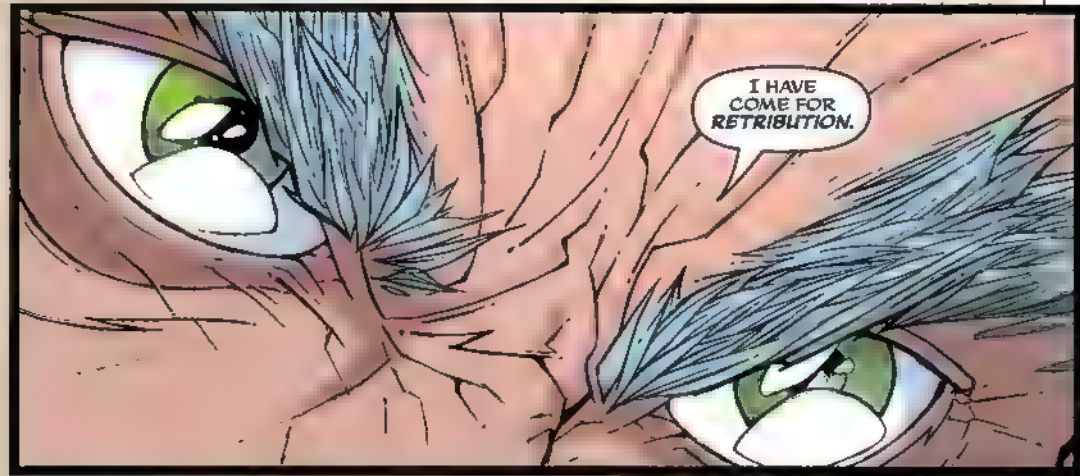
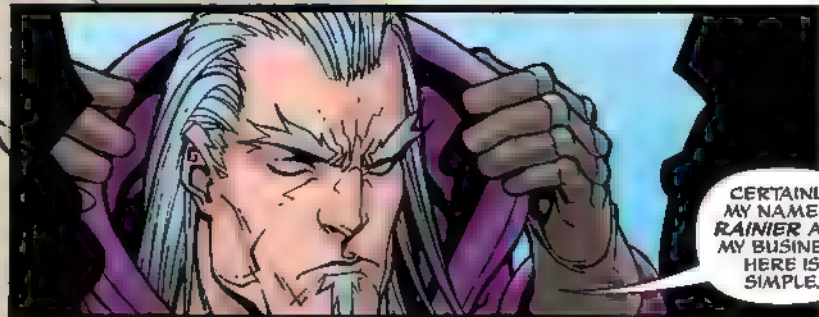
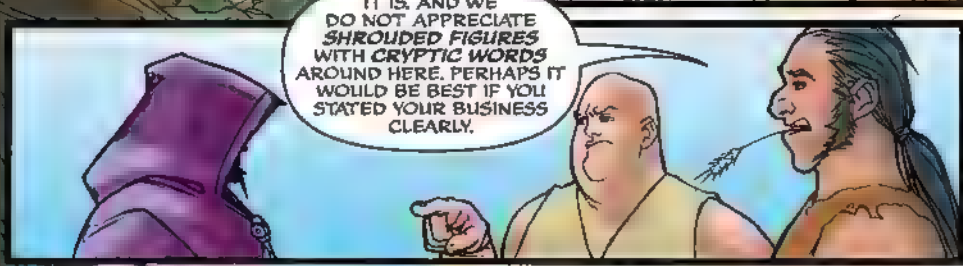
SOMEONE IS COMING.

HURRY AND OPEN THE OTHER CAGES. WE MUST GIVE EVERYONE A CHANCE.

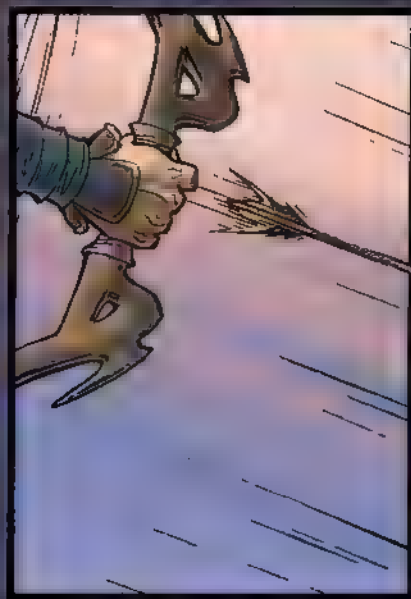


STOP
THEM!



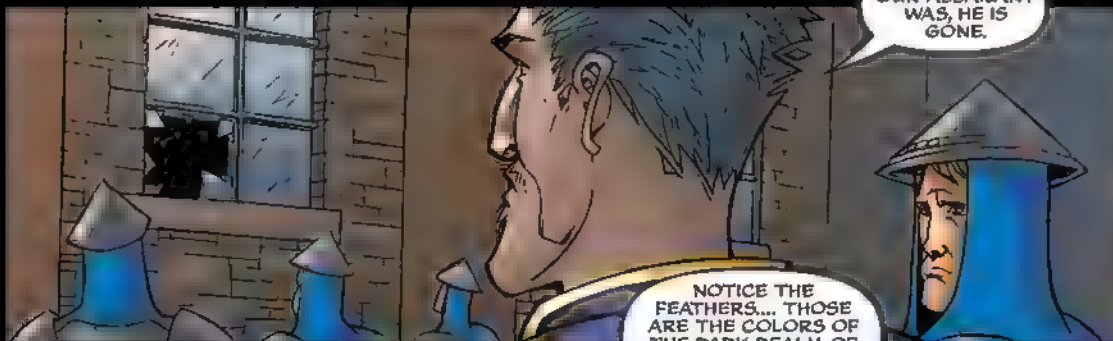




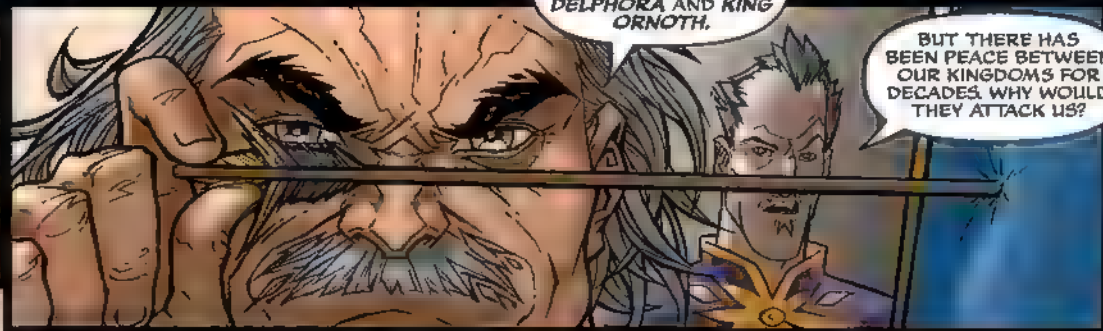




WHOEVER
OUR ASSAILANT
WAS, HE IS
GONE.



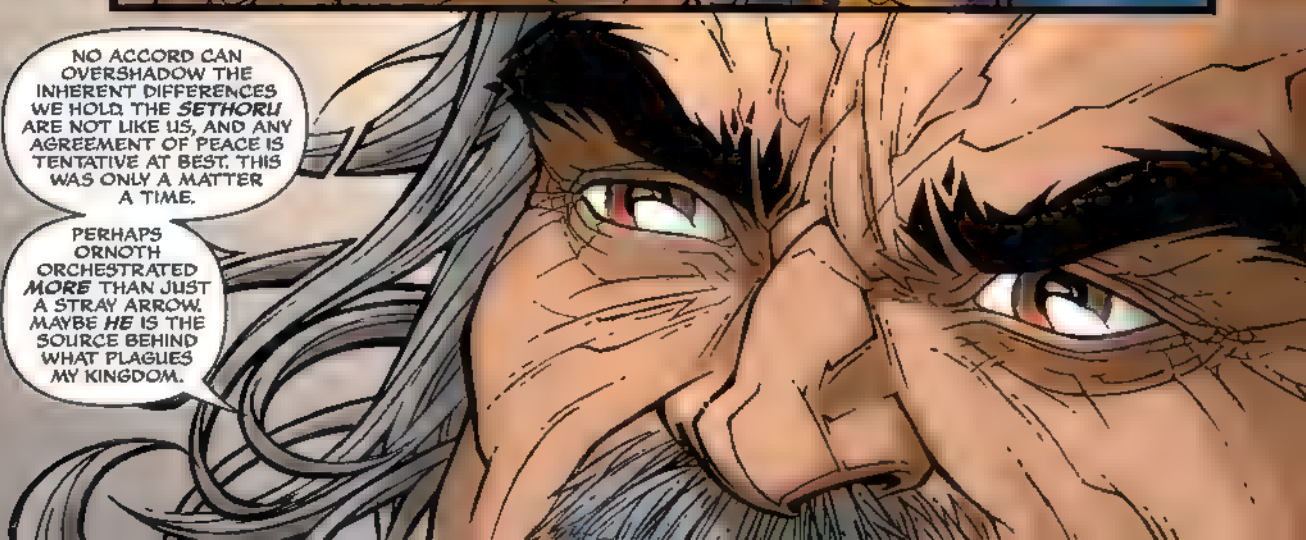
NOTICE THE
FEATHERS... THOSE
ARE THE COLORS OF
THE DARK REALM OF
DELPHORA AND KING
ORNOTH.

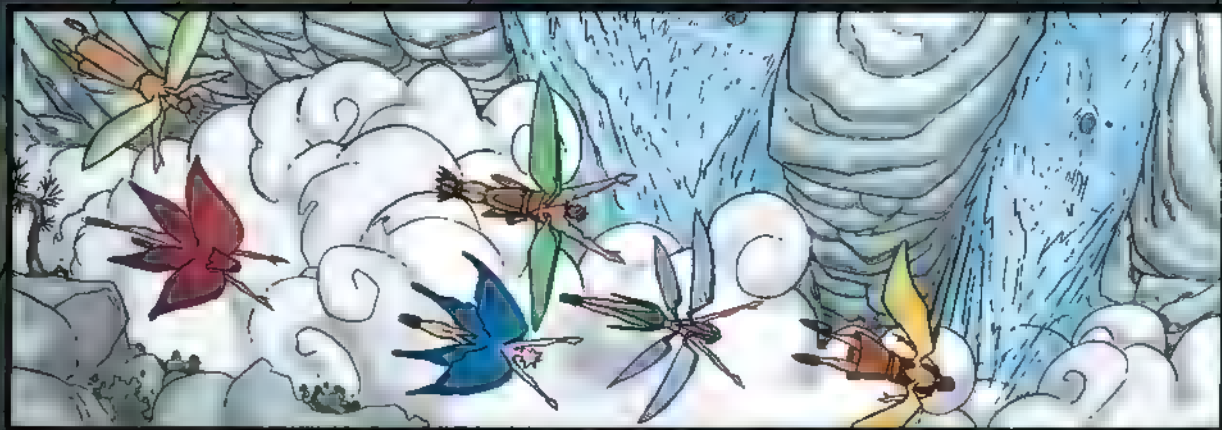
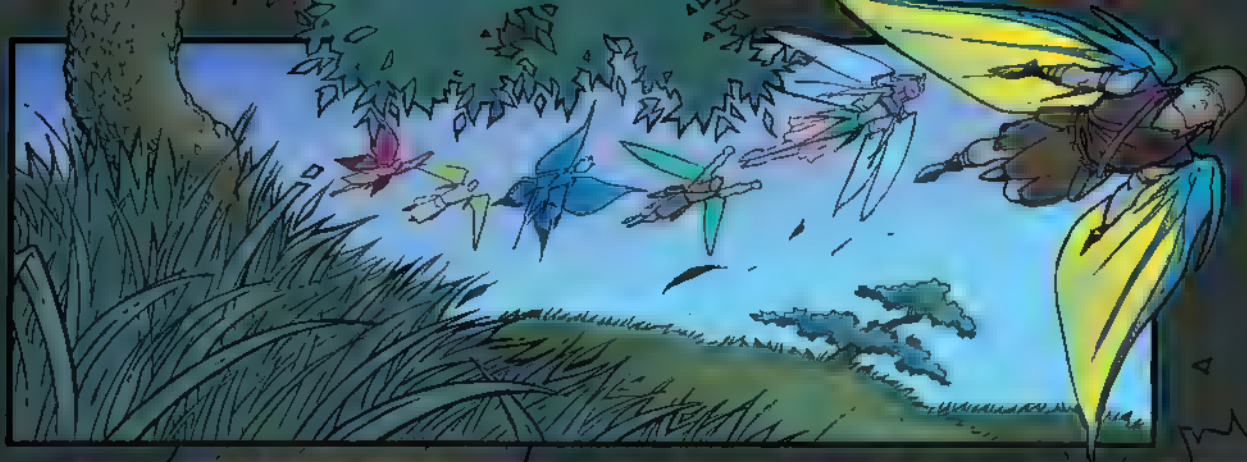


BUT THERE HAS
BEEN PEACE BETWEEN
OUR KINGDOMS FOR
DECADES. WHY WOULD
THEY ATTACK US?

NO ACCORD CAN
OVERSHADOW THE
INHERENT DIFFERENCES
WE HOLD. THE *SETHORU*
ARE NOT LIKE US, AND ANY
AGREEMENT OF PEACE IS
TENTATIVE AT BEST. THIS
WAS ONLY A MATTER
A TIME.

PERHAPS
ORNOTH
ORCHESTRATED
MORE THAN JUST
A STRAY ARROW.
MAYBE *HE* IS THE
SOURCE BEHIND
WHAT PLAGUES
MY KINGDOM.





WE'VE BEEN TRAVELING FOR TWO DAYS. NOT TO SOUND LIKE THE BABY OF THIS LITTLE CARAVAN, BUT HOW MUCH FURTHER ARE WE GOING?

ONCE WE REACH THE END OF THE FOREST, WE WILL BE AT THE BASE OF MOUNT DRACQ TWO... THREE DAYS IF WE MAKE GOOD TIME.



I DO NOT DESERVE SPECIAL SYMPATHY. LIKE ALL OF THE KING'S LANDS, **EMPYREA** IS DYING. THE SKIES ONCE FILLED WITH ITS PEOPLE ARE ALL BUT **EMPTY**. AND THE CANDLES BURNING FOR THOSE LOST TO US HAVE GROWN SO NUMEROUS AS TO MAKE NIGHT APPEAR AS BRIGHT AS DAY.

BUT THERE IS NO BRIGHTNESS IN THE EYES OF MY PEOPLE. IT SEEMS AS IF EVEN THOSE THAT LIVE ARE DEAD AS WELL.

IF TIME IS SO PRECIOUS, WHY NOT FLY OVER THIS FOREST INSTEAD OF TRUDGING THROUGH IT?

IT IS TOO DANGEROUS. THE AREA IS RIFE WITH **DRAGONS**. THOSE OF THE TWO-LEGGED VARIETY. WE CANNOT TAKE THE RISK OF DRAWING THEIR ATTENTION.

HERE, TROY, LET ME HELP YOU.

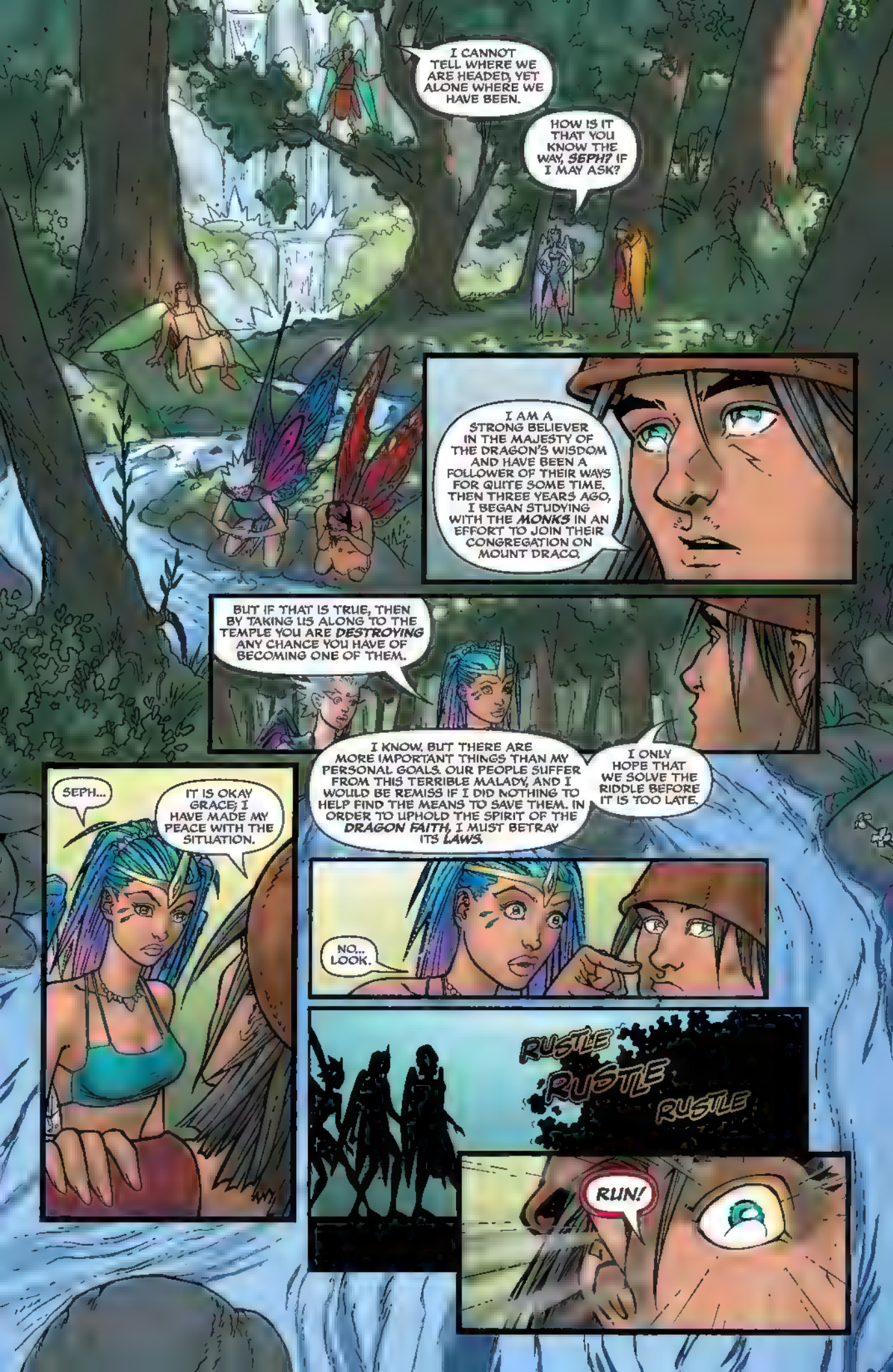
I AM FINE.

WE CAN SIT IF YOU NEED. I'M SURE THE OTHERS COULD USE A RESPITE.

DO NOT STOP ON MY ACCOUNT.

EVERYONE IS TRYING TO BE SO BRAVE.

COULD WE REST FOR JUST A MOMENT? I AM FEELING SHORT OF BREATH.



I CANNOT
TELL WHERE WE
ARE HEADED, YET
ALONE WHERE WE
HAVE BEEN.

HOW IS IT
THAT YOU
KNOW THE
WAY, SEPH? IF
I MAY ASK?

I AM A
STRONG BELIEVER
IN THE MAJESTY OF
THE DRAGON'S WISDOM
AND HAVE BEEN A
FOLLOWER OF THEIR WAYS
FOR QUITE SOME TIME.
THEN THREE YEARS AGO,
I BEGAN STUDYING
WITH THE **MONKS** IN AN
EFFORT TO JOIN THEIR
CONGREGATION ON
MOUNT DRACO.

BUT IF THAT IS TRUE, THEN
BY TAKING US ALONG TO THE
TEMPLE YOU ARE **DESTROYING**
ANY CHANCE YOU HAVE OF
BECOMING ONE OF THEM.

I KNOW, BUT THERE ARE
MORE IMPORTANT THINGS THAN MY
PERSONAL GOALS. OUR PEOPLE SUFFER
FROM THIS TERRIBLE MALADY, AND I
WOULD BE REMISS IF I DID NOTHING TO
HELP FIND THE MEANS TO SAVE THEM. IN
ORDER TO UPHOLD THE SPIRIT OF THE
DRAGON FAITH, I MUST BETRAY
ITS LAWS.

I ONLY
HOPE THAT
WE SOLVE THE
RIDDLE BEFORE
IT IS TOO LATE.

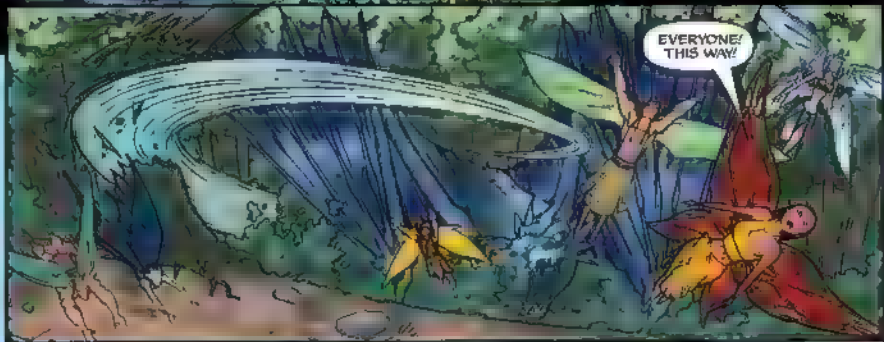
SEPH...

IT IS OKAY
GRACE; I
HAVE MADE MY
PEACE WITH THE
SITUATION.

NO...
LOOK.

RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

RUN!



EVERYONE!
THIS WAY!

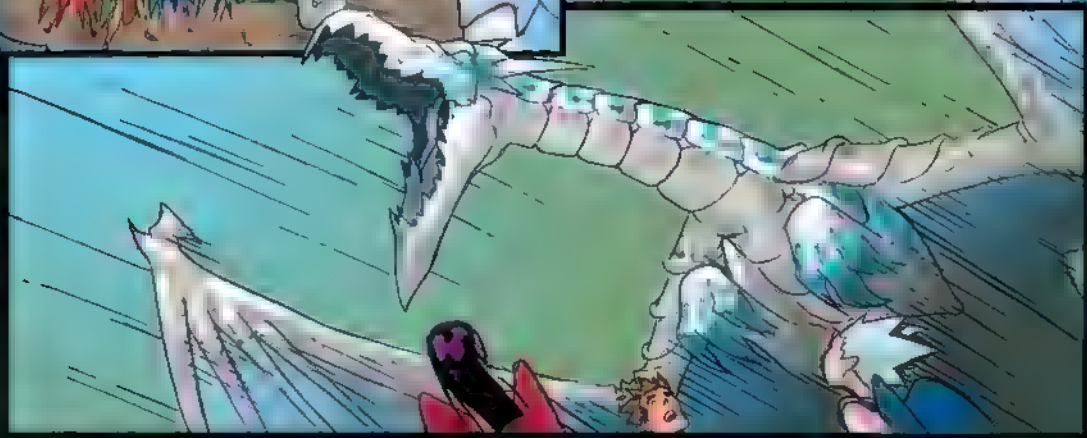
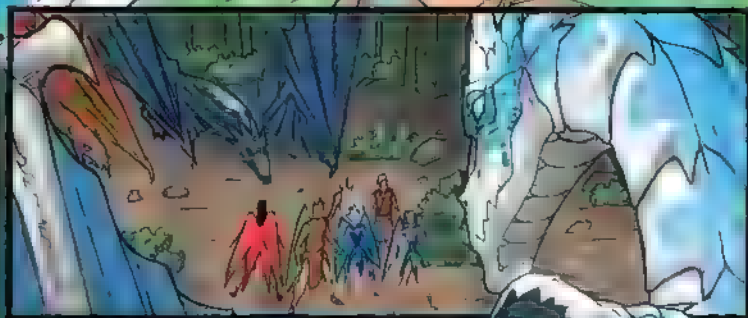


UM, ANY
IDEAS? SEPH,
MAYBE YOU CAN
REASON WITH
THEM.



STAND ASIDE
DRAGONS! I WILL
NOT BE TURNED
AWAY FROM MY QUEST
EVEN BY CREATURES
AS POWERFUL AS
YOU.

HURRY! I
CANNOT HOLD
THEM OFF FOR
LONG.





WELLSPRING
IS A FRIEND, AS ARE
MANY OF THE FOUR-
LEGGED DRAGONS. THEY
ARE SMARTER THAN
THE TWO-LEGGED
SPECIES... MORE
CIVILIZED.

COME. LET
US NOT
WASTE HIS
BRAVERY.

NOT THAT I
AM COMPLAINING,
BUT CAN SOMEONE
PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY
WE ARE NOT DEAD?

AN
INTELLIGENT
DRAGON...WHO
KNEW?

HAVE YOU
NEVER VENTURED
BEYOND YOUR LITTLE
WORLD? DRAGONS ARE
WISER THAN YOU OR I
COULD EVER HOPE TO BE.
THEY HAVE BEEN
AROUND LONG
BEFORE US...

...AND WILL
BE AROUND
LONG AFTER
US.

I AM
SORRY, DEX
I DID NOT
MEAN--

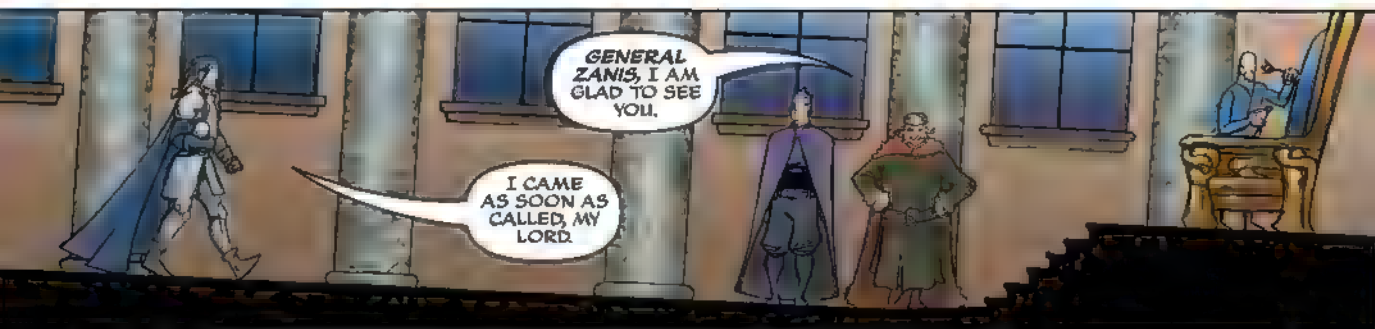
IT'S OKAY.

IT'S NOT
HOW MUCH
TIME YOU HAVE,
BUT **WHO** YOU
SPEND IT WITH.
RIGHT, FAYE?

RIGHT.

TROY, ARE
YOU OKAY? IT
LOOKED LIKE THAT
DRAGON GOT YOU
BACK THERE.

I AM
FINE, WE
MUST KEEP
MOVING.



GENERAL ZANIS, I AM GLAD TO SEE YOU.

I CAME AS SOON AS CALLED, MY LORD.

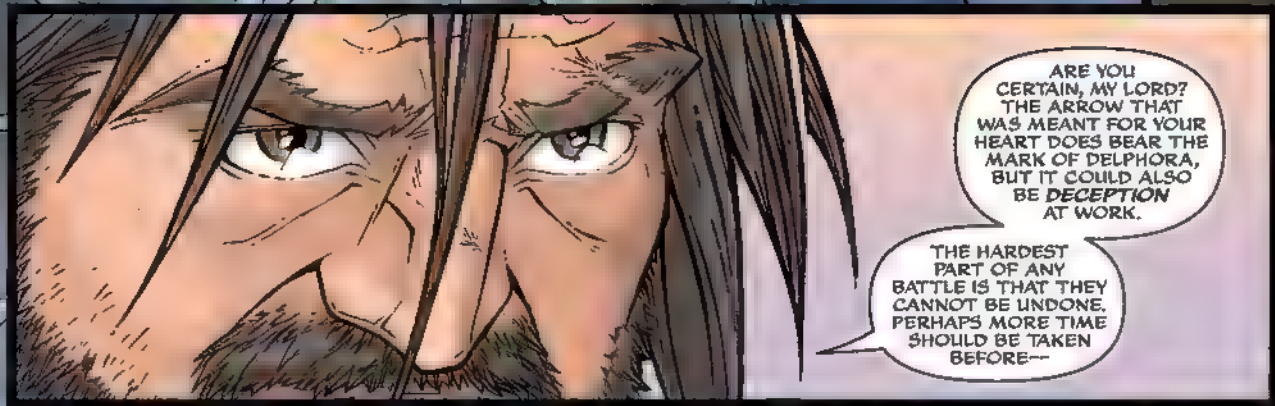
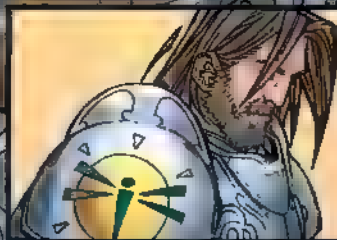
BECAUSE OF YOUR DEDICATION AND SERVICE, ARCADIA HAS BEEN BLESSED WITH MANY YEARS OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY.

THANK YOU, MY LORD.



BUT I AM AFRAID THAT CONFLICT ONCE AGAIN KNOCKS UPON OUR DOOR. IT WOULD SEEM THAT TIME HAS NOT QUELLED KING ORNOTH'S THIRST FOR POWER. POISON AND ARROWS SEEM TO BE HIS SILENT WEAPONS OF CHOICE, BUT NOW WE WILL SOUND THE DRUM OF WAR AND TAKE THE BATTLE TO HIM.

PREPARE YOUR MEN. YOU WILL LEAVE IMMEDIATELY FOR DELPHORA.



ARE YOU CERTAIN, MY LORD? THE ARROW THAT WAS MEANT FOR YOUR HEART DOES BEAR THE MARK OF DELPHORA, BUT IT COULD ALSO BE DECEPTION AT WORK.

THE HARDEST PART OF ANY BATTLE IS THAT THEY CANNOT BE UNDONE. PERHAPS MORE TIME SHOULD BE TAKEN BEFORE--

TIME???

AN ASSASSIN
SNEAKS INTO MY
THRONE AND
NEARLY KILLS ME! THIS
DISEASE RUNS WILD
ACROSS MY LAND,
INTENT ON INFECTING
US ALL! ORNOOTH
MUST PAY FOR HIS
TREACHERY!

THERE IS MUCH
FEAR REGARDING THE
SICKNESS, BUT SOME OF
IT COMES FROM **DARK**
RUMORS CONCERNING THE
ILL THAT COME FORWARD.
THEY ARE SAID TO BE
TREATED AS
CRIMINALS...

...LIKE
ENEMIES OF
THE KING.

PLEASE, ZANIS,
WE MUST BE
CAUTIOUS. THE EXTENT
OF THIS SICKNESS
REMAINS A MYSTERY.

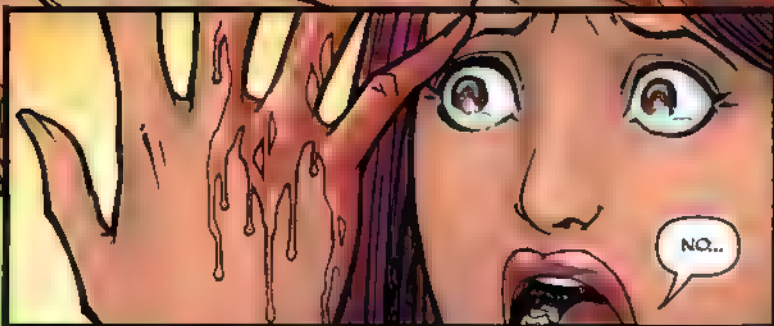
IT IS
BARBARIC EVEN
IN THE MOST
DESPERATE OF
TIMES.

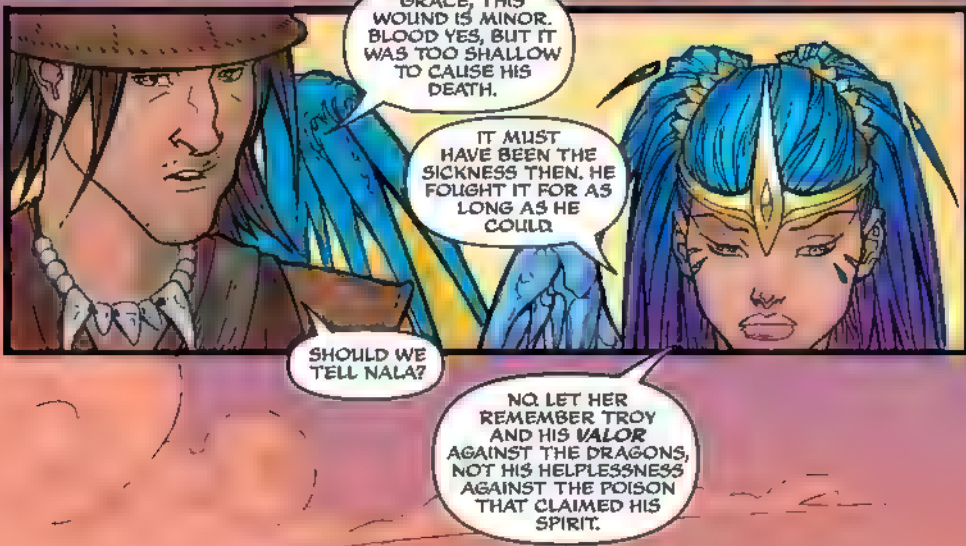
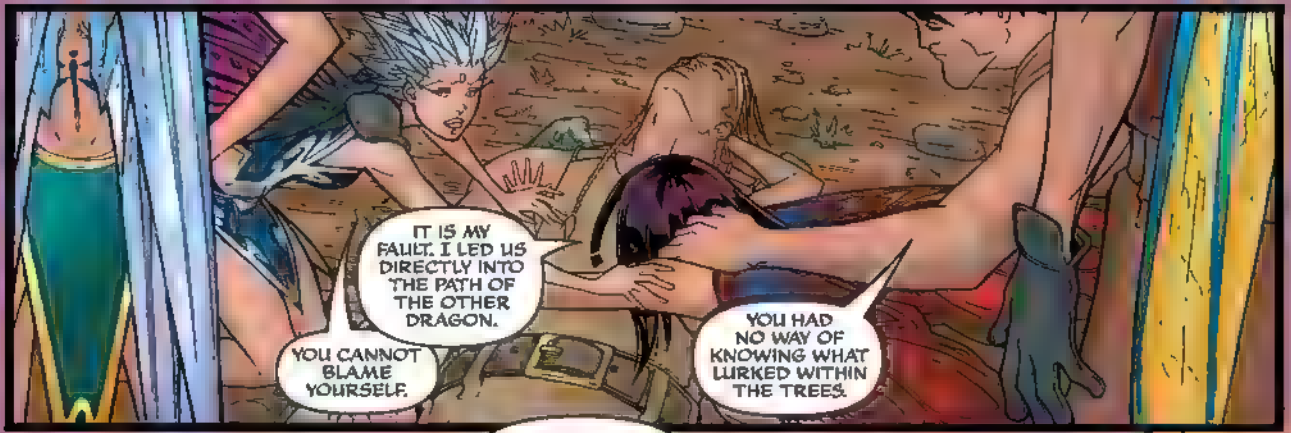
VINN IS ONLY
DOING WHAT HE
THINKS IS BEST FOR THE
KINGDOM. WE MUST
CONTAIN WHATEVER AILS
OUR PEOPLE BEFORE ALL
ARE INFECTED.

IF THOSE
EXPOSED WILL NOT
COME TO US
VOLUNTARILY, THEN WE
SHALL GO DOOR-TO-
DOOR IF WE MUST.

I WILL
HANDLE THINGS
HERE. YOU HAVE
YOUR **ORDERS**,
GENERAL.

YES, MY
LORD.





RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE

IT APPEARS
AS THOUGH WE
ARE IN FOR QUITE
A STORM TODAY.

YES, I...

RUMBLE
RUMBLE

RUMBLE
RUMBLE

...WAIT.

RUMBLE



THAT IS
NOT THUNDER
IN THE SKY...





#3

OF 5

COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE DYING OF THE LIGHT



SOULFIRE™ CREATED BY



SOULFIRE™ CREATED BY:
MICHAEL TURNER



a tale of magic by

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words
MICHAEL TURNER
—co-plot

MICAH GUNNELL
pictures

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—lettering

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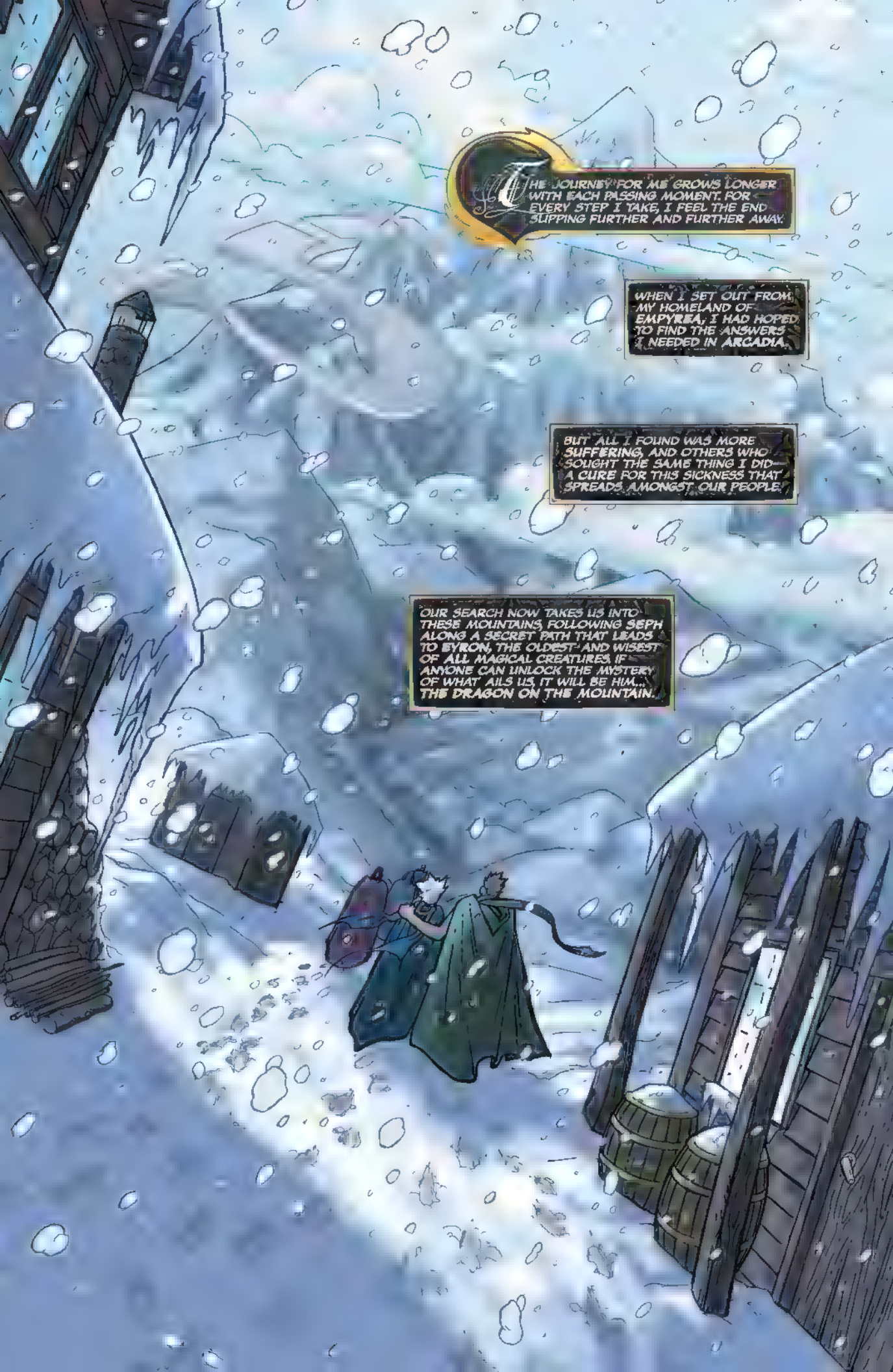
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THE JOURNEY FOR ME GROWS LONGER
WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT. FOR
EVERY STEP I TAKE, I FEEL THE END
SLIPPING FURTHER AND FURTHER AWAY.

WHEN I SET OUT FROM
MY HOMELAND OF
EMPYREA, I HAD HOPED
TO FIND THE ANSWERS
I NEEDED IN ARGADIA.

BUT ALL I FOUND WAS MORE
SUFFERING, AND OTHERS WHO
SOUGHT THE SAME THING I DID—
A CURE FOR THIS SICKNESS THAT
SPREADS AMONGST OUR PEOPLE.

OUR SEARCH NOW TAKES US INTO
THESE MOUNTAINS, FOLLOWING SEPH
ALONG A SECRET PATH THAT LEADS
TO EYRON, THE OLDEST AND WISEST
OF ALL MAGICAL CREATURES. IF
ANYONE CAN UNLOCK THE MYSTERY
OF WHAT AILS US, IT WILL BE HIM...
THE DRAGON ON THE MOUNTAIN.

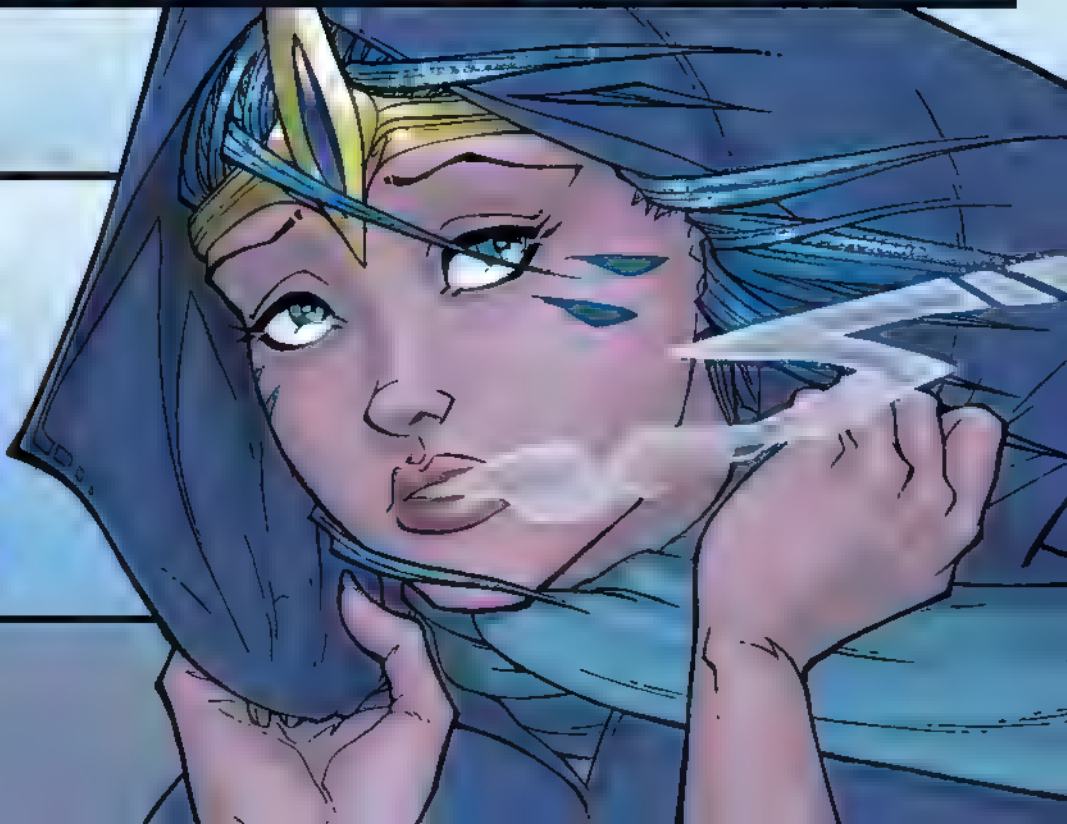


NALA HAS BEEN QUIET SINCE WE
LOST YORK, AND I SEE HOW DEX
WATCHES FAYE WITH CLOSE EYES.
HIS CONCERN FOR HER
OUTWEIGHED ONLY BY HIS LOVE.

MY HEART IS HEAVY AS WELL, BUT MY
LOVED ONES ARE BACK IN EMPYREA. MY
AUNT HAS ALREADY PASSED AND BOTH
OF MY PARENTS HAVE SHOWN SIGNS OF
THE SICKNESS. IT SEEMS THAT NO ONE
IS TO BE SPARED FROM THIS MISERY.



NOW MORE THAN
EVER, WE NEED OUR
KING TO LEAD US
TOWARD SALVATION.



BUT, MINAS HAS
PLACED HIS TRUST
IN HIS CHANCELLOR
VINN— A MAN
WITHOUT
COMPASSION,
WHOSE SOLUTION
WAS SIMPLY TO
LOCK AWAY ANY
WHO TURNED TO
THEM FOR HELP.

I FEAR THAT
PANIC IS
GROWING.

...AND THAT
THE WORST IS
YET TO COME.

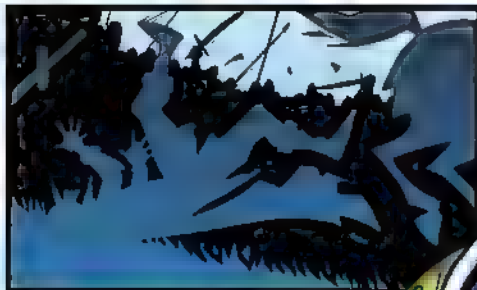
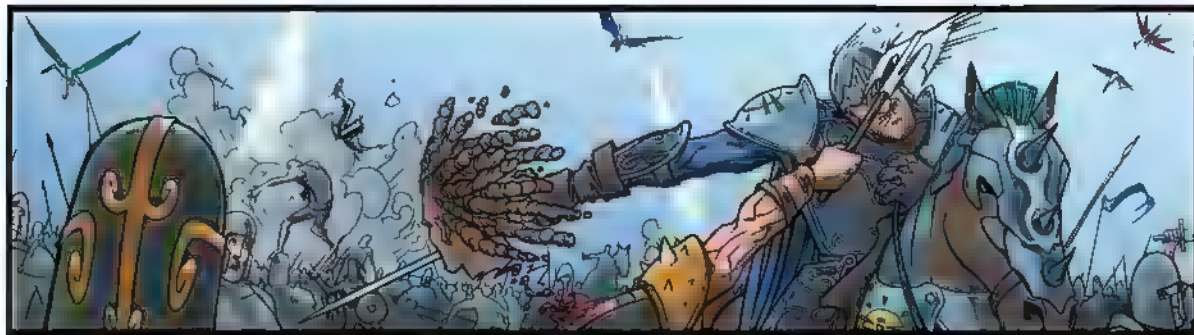
IT APPEARS
THAT THE
SETHORU HAVE
ANTICIPATED
OUR ARRIVAL.

NO
MATTER.

WE CAME
FOR A WAR,
NOT AN
AMBUSH.

WARRIORS
OF ARCADIA!
FOR YOUR KING!
FOR THE
RAHTUMI!





RAAAAAAAAAA!





THEY'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO DESTROY ONE ANOTHER. THEY ONLY NEEDED A REASON.

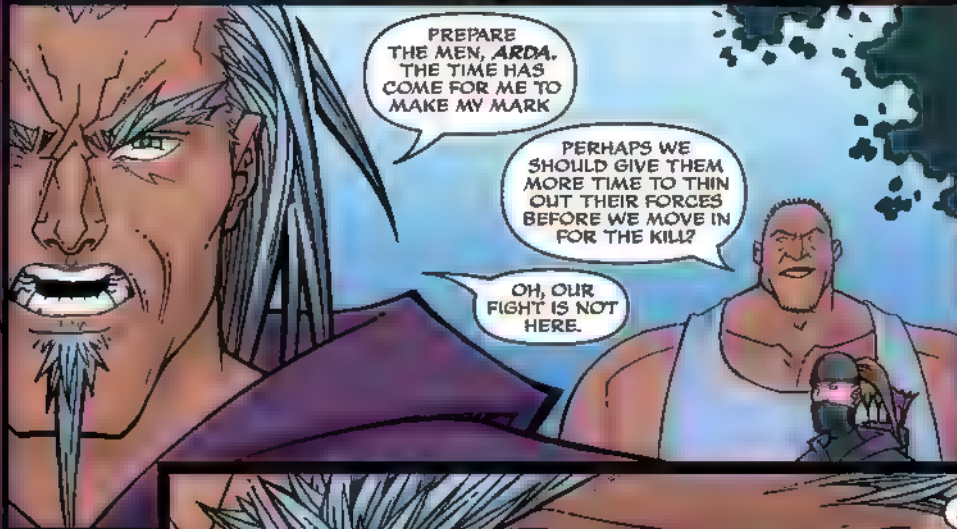
NOTHING LIKE A WELL-PLACED ARROW TO INITIATE A LITTLE MISDIRECTION.



PREPARE THE MEN, ARDA. THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO MAKE MY MARK

PERHAPS WE SHOULD GIVE THEM MORE TIME TO THIN OUT THEIR FORCES BEFORE WE MOVE IN FOR THE KILL?

OH, OUR FIGHT IS NOT HERE.



ARCADIA.

THAT IS WHERE OUR WAR AWAITS US.



IS ANYONE ELSE STARTING TO THINK THIS IS A WASTE OF TIME? TELL ME SEPH, HOW IS IT THAT YOU CAN PUT SUCH FAITH IN A DRAGON?

EVRON IS NOT **JUST** ANY DRAGON. HE IS THE **AGELESS ONE**, WHOSE EXISTENCE HAS SPANNED ALL OF TIME.

JUST BECAUSE HE IS OLD, DOES THAT MEAN YOU SHOULD LOOK TO HIM FOR GUIDANCE?

NO MORE SO THAN YOU SHOULD LOOK TO YOUR KING FOR GUIDANCE, SIMPLY DUE TO THE BLOOD THAT RUNS THROUGH HIS VEINS.

MY KING? MINAS IS NO LONGER YOUR KING, SEPH?

HE RULES THE LANDS IN WHICH I DWELL, BUT HE STOPPED BEING A KING FOR ME WHEN I DECIDED TO WALK ANOTHER PATH IN LIFE.

THE MONKS HAVE TAUGHT ME THE **TRUTH**. EVRON IS THE WORLD. HE DOES NOT ASK FOR NOR DEMAND OBEDIENCE. HE MERELY **IS**. IT IS OUR **WILL** THAT DRIVES US TO FOLLOW HIM-- TO LOOK TO HIM AS AN EXAMPLE FOR LIVING IN HARMONY WITH THE WORLD.

CAN YOU CLAIM THE SAME WITH MINAS OR ANY OTHER SO-CALLED RULER IN THIS WORLD?



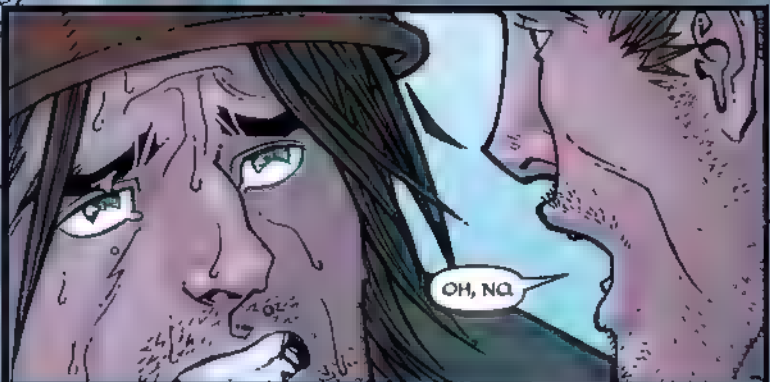
THE
TEMPLE. I
SEE IT.



I WAS
STARTING
TO WONDER
IF IT EVEN
EXISTED.



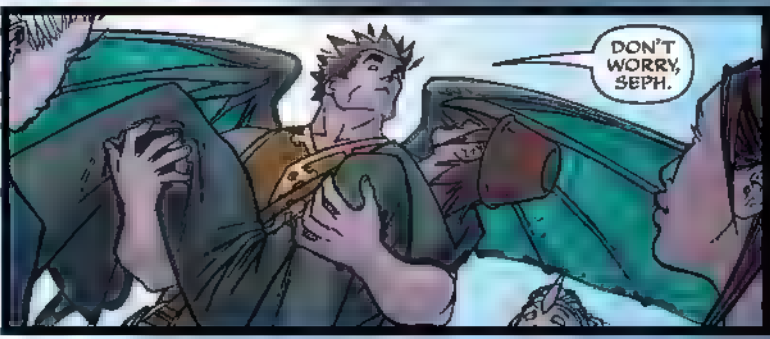
COME ON,
SEPH. YOU CAN
BOW WHEN WE
ACTUALLY GET
THERE.



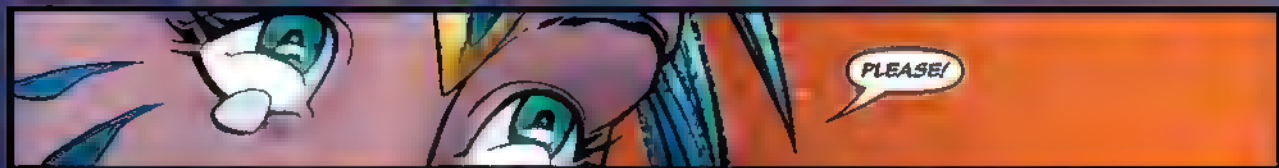
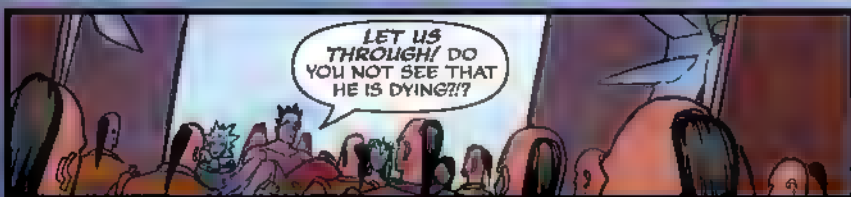
OH, NA



WE HAVE
TO HURRY!

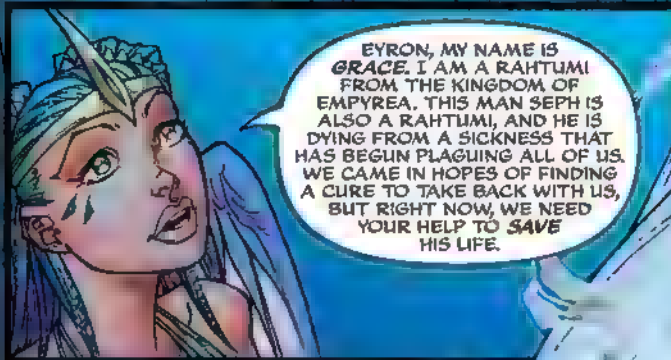


DON'T
WORRY,
SEPH.





...EYRON.



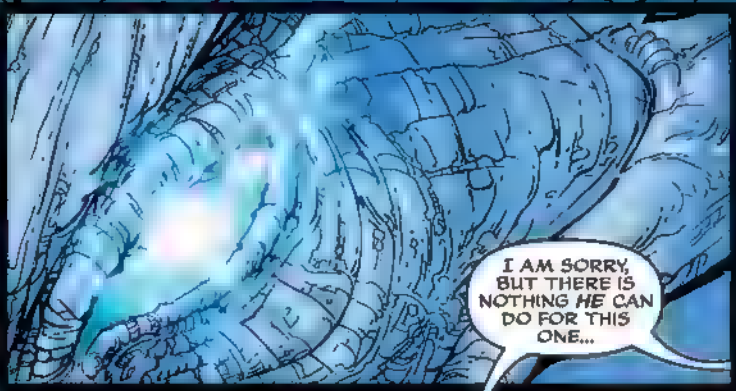
EYRON, MY NAME IS **GRACE**. I AM A RAHTUMI FROM THE KINGDOM OF EMPYREA. THIS MAN SEPH IS ALSO A RAHTUMI, AND HE IS DYING FROM A SICKNESS THAT HAS BEGUN PLAGUING ALL OF US. WE CAME IN HOPES OF FINDING A CURE TO TAKE BACK WITH US, BUT RIGHT NOW, WE NEED YOUR HELP TO **SAVE** HIS LIFE.



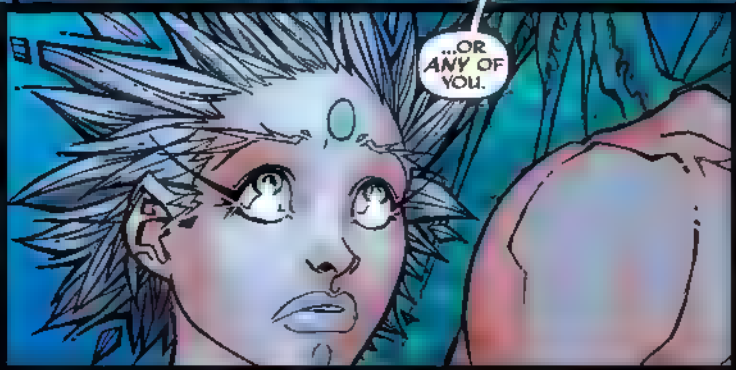
WELL...

ARE YOU GOING TO **SAVE** HIM OR NOT?

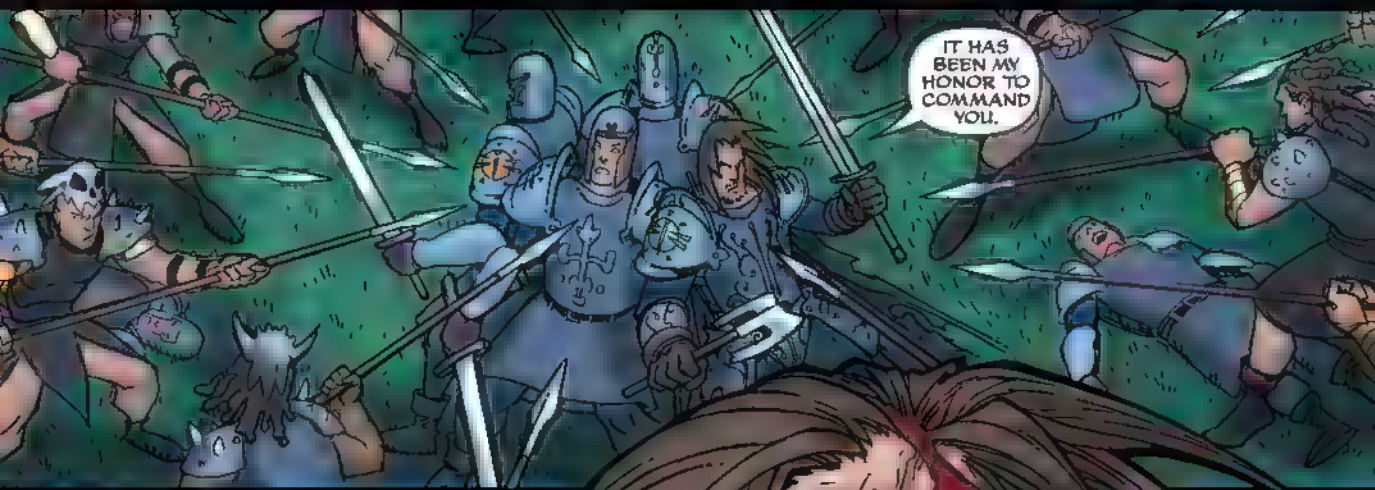
DEX!



I AM SORRY, BUT THERE IS NOTHING **HE** CAN DO FOR THIS ONE...



...OR ANY OF YOU.

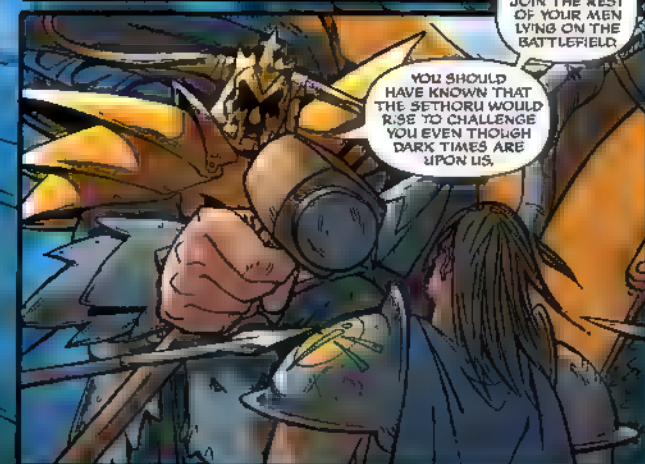




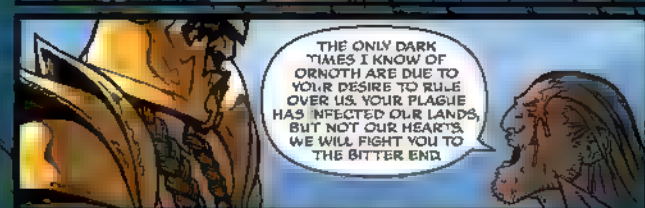
KING ORNOTH!



DROP YOUR WEAPONS OR JOIN THE REST OF YOUR MEN LYING ON THE BATTLEFIELD.



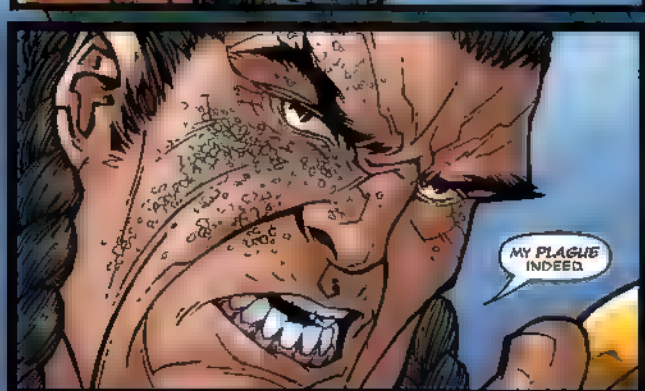
YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT THE SETHORU WOULD RISE TO CHALLENGE YOU EVEN THOUGH DARK TIMES ARE UPON US.



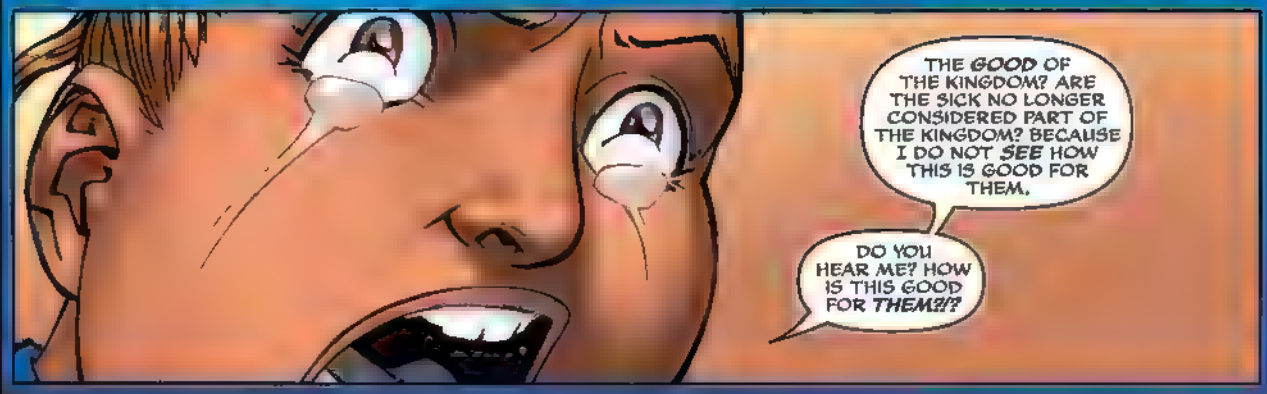
THE ONLY DARK TIMES I KNOW OF ORNOTH ARE DUE TO YOUR DESIRE TO RULE OVER US. YOUR PLAGUE HAS INFECTED OUR LANDS, BUT NOT OUR HEARTS. WE WILL FIGHT YOU TO THE BITTER END.

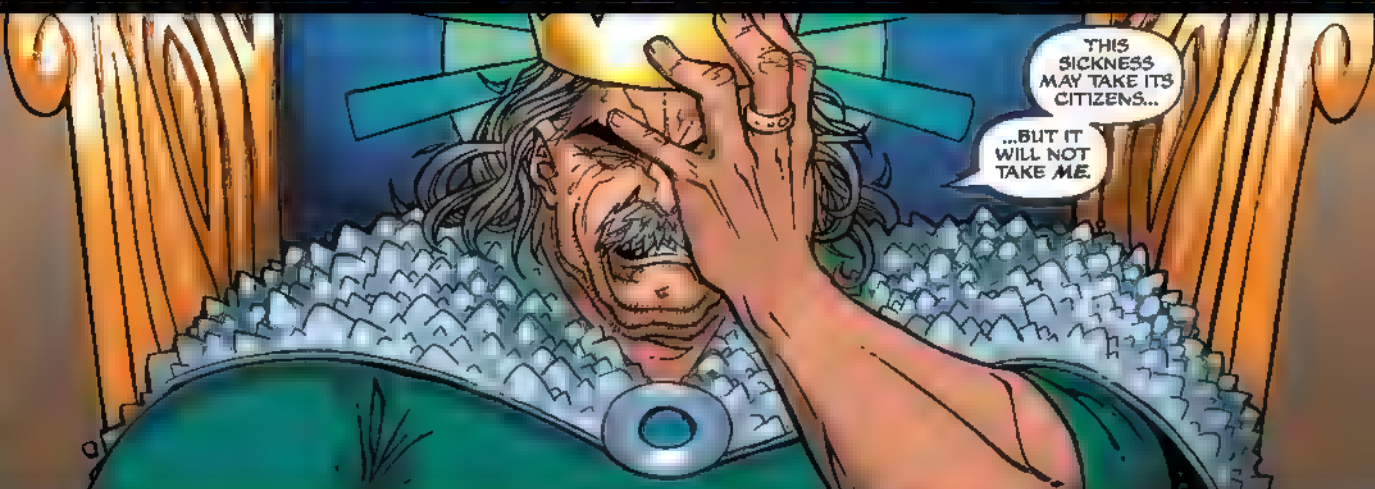
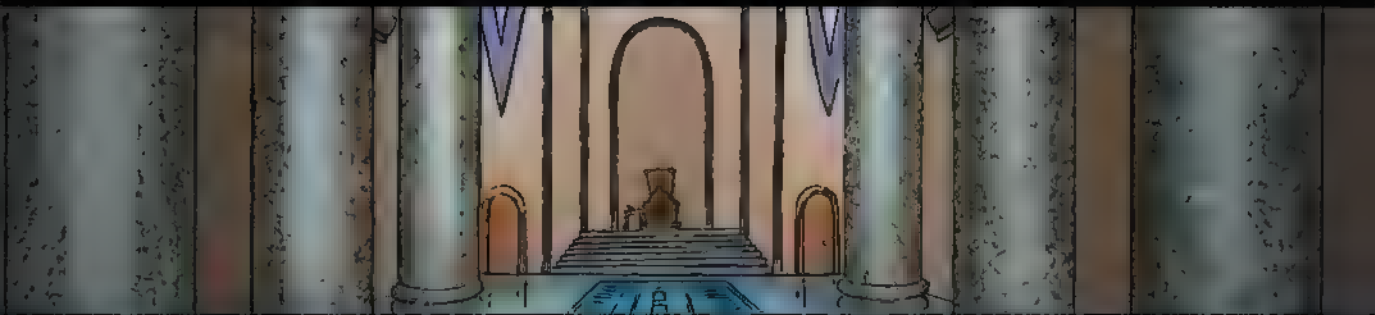


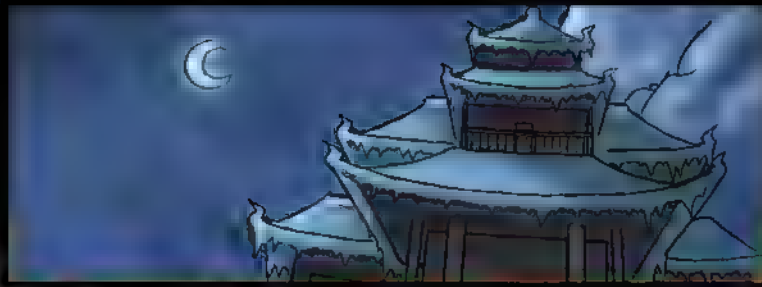
MY PLAGUE?



MY PLAGUE INDEED.







SO... SO MUCH FOR MY BRILLIANT PLAN.

SHHH. SAVE YOUR STRENGTH.

GUESS YOU WERE RIGHT AND I WAS WRONG, DEX. FUNNY IN A WAY, ISN'T IT?

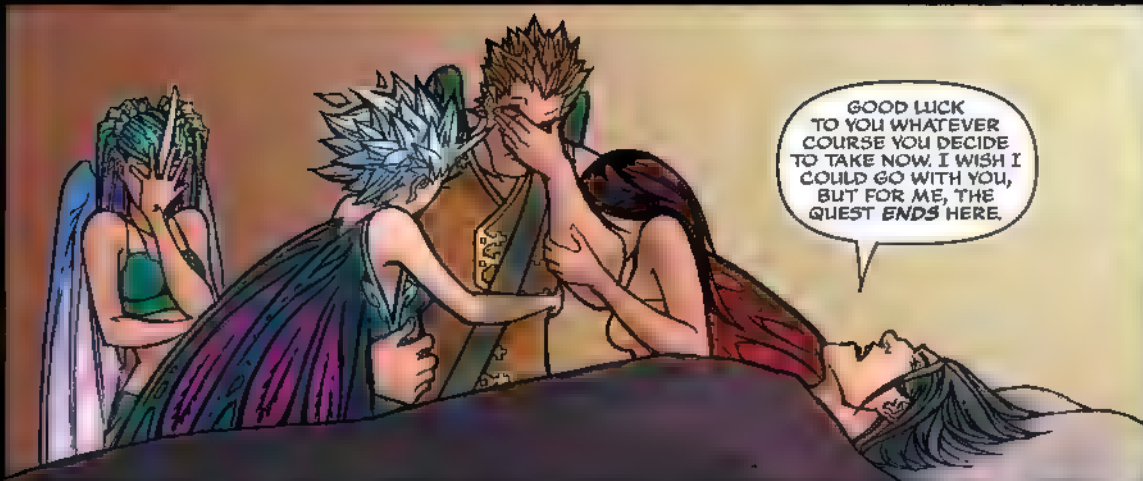


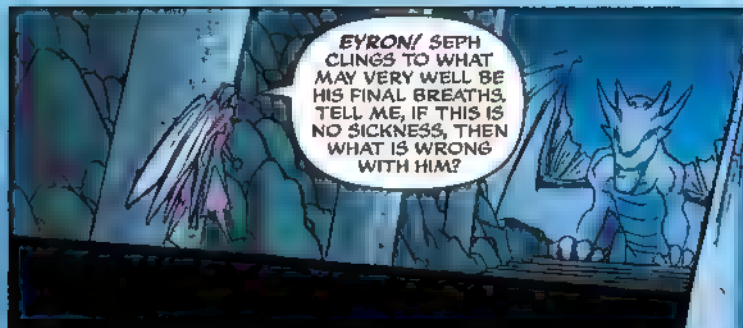
THERE IS NOTHING FUNNY ABOUT SEEING A FRIEND SUFFER.

STILL... EVEN THOUGH WE DID NOT FIND WHAT WE CAME HERE FOR, I AM GLAD TO SPEND MY LAST REMAINING MOMENTS IN THIS TEMPLE.



GOOD LUCK TO YOU WHATEVER COURSE YOU DECIDE TO TAKE NOW. I WISH I COULD GO WITH YOU, BUT FOR ME, THE QUEST ENDS HERE.





EYRON/ SEPH
CLINGS TO WHAT
MAY VERY WELL BE
HIS FINAL BREATHS.
TELL ME, IF THIS IS
NO SICKNESS, THEN
WHAT IS WRONG
WITH HIM?

MOONRAAAA
NAAA N ROO.
KRIKK DAN DOORR
RAAAAH HMMR.

EYRON SAYS
THAT THERE IS
NOTHING **WRONG** WITH
SEPH; HE IS MERELY
EXPERIENCING THE
REALITY OF OUR
SITUATION. THE **LIGHT**
HAS DIED... **MAGIC**
IS FADING.

WHAT DOES
THAT MEAN...
FADING?

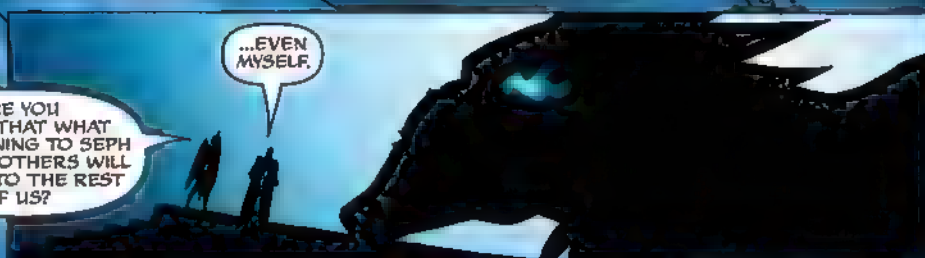
KIRR NOR
THRAKKK TI HUUM
SURRR SII... SUL RAAHN
NAAAR KRIK DOORR NUN.
BAL MIRRA NO NOORA SI
RAAAHH KRIKK TAM
RANNN... KIKK NOPN.

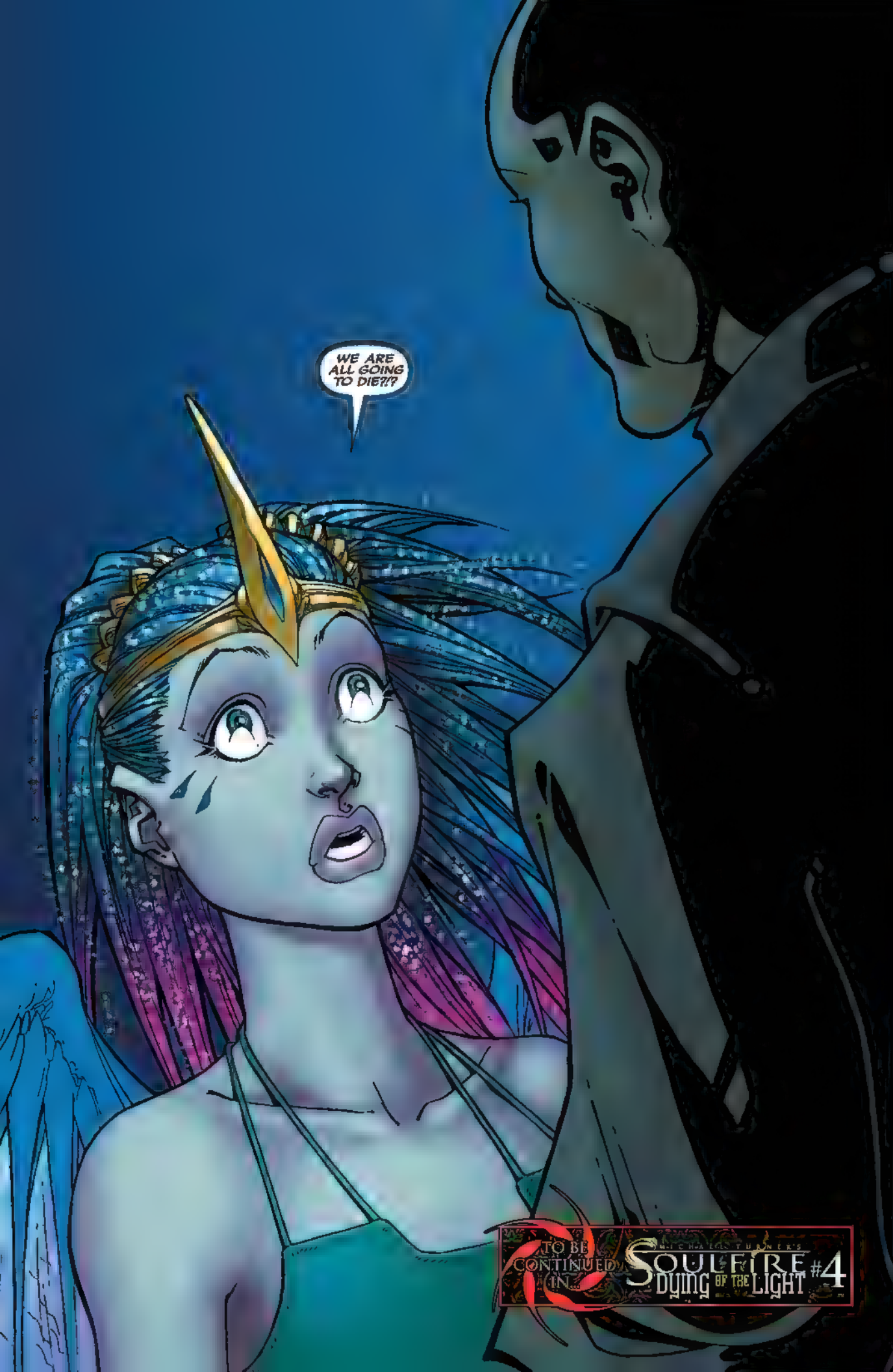


OUR EXISTENCE DOES
NOT TRAVEL ALONG A
STRAIGHT LINE, BUT RATHER IN
A **CIRCLE**... IT IS A **CYCLE**, AND IN
THAT **CYCLE**, THE TIME OF OUR
WORLD IS PASSING, **MAGIC** IS
DWINDLING. WE HAVE LIVED FOR
MANY YEARS UNDER THE **MAGICAL**
INFLUENCE OF THE **LIGHT**, BUT
NOW **DARKER** TIMES ARE UPON
US, AND I AM AFRAID THAT
NONE ARE TO BE SPARED...

...EVEN
MYSELF.

ARE YOU
SAYING THAT WHAT
IS HAPPENING TO SEPH
AND THE OTHERS WILL
HAPPEN TO THE REST
OF US?





A comic book panel featuring a woman with a unicorn horn and a man. The woman, in the foreground, has a golden unicorn horn on her head, blue hair with pink highlights, and a green halter top. She has a shocked expression with wide eyes and an open mouth. A man with dark hair and a goatee, wearing a dark suit, is shown in profile from the chest up, looking down at her. A speech bubble from the man contains the text "WE ARE ALL GOING TO DIE??". The background is a solid blue color.

WE ARE
ALL GOING
TO DIE??



#4
OF 5
COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S
SOULFIRE
DYING OF THE LIGHT



SOULFIRE™ CREATED BY



SOULFIRE™ CREATED BY:
MICHAEL TURNER



a tale of magic by

J.T. KRUL
words
MICHAEL TURNER
—co-plot

MICAH GUNNELL
pictures

BETH SOTELO
—colors

DREAMER DESIGN
—lettering

SOULFIRE: DYING OF THE LIGHT ISSUE FOUR OF FIVE

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HOW QUICKLY ONE'S WORLD CAN CHANGE ONCE THEY REALIZE THE TRUTH SURROUNDING IT.

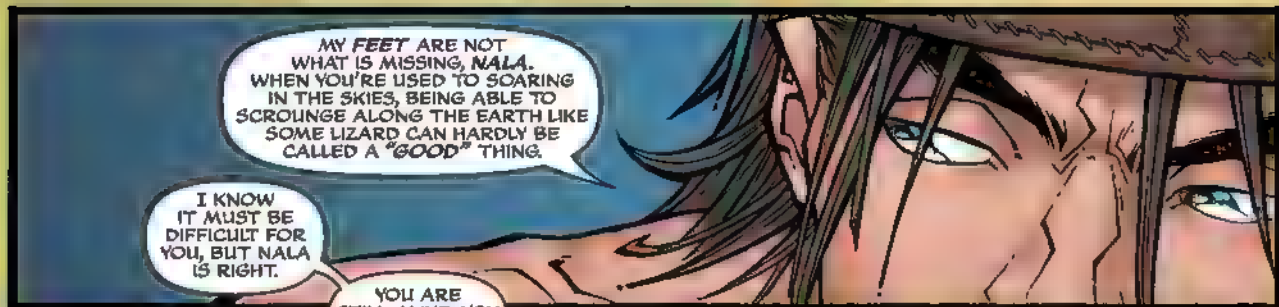
WHEN MY AUNT'S WINGS FELL AND SHE PASSED ON, I FOUND MYSELF BURDENED WITH A FEAR THAT I MIGHT SUFFER HER FATE.

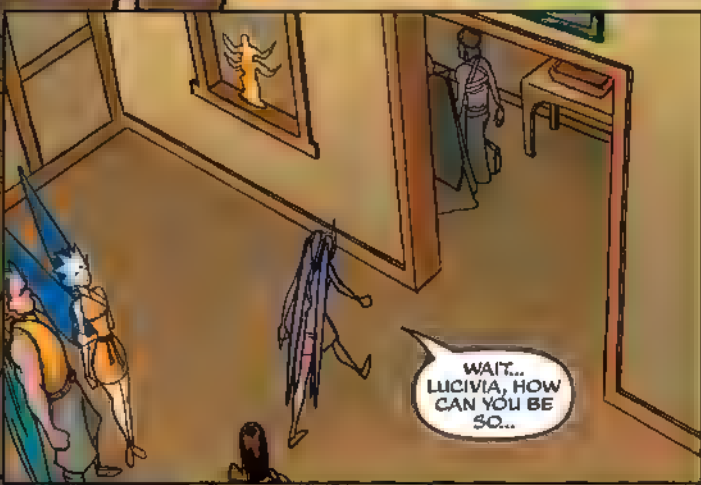
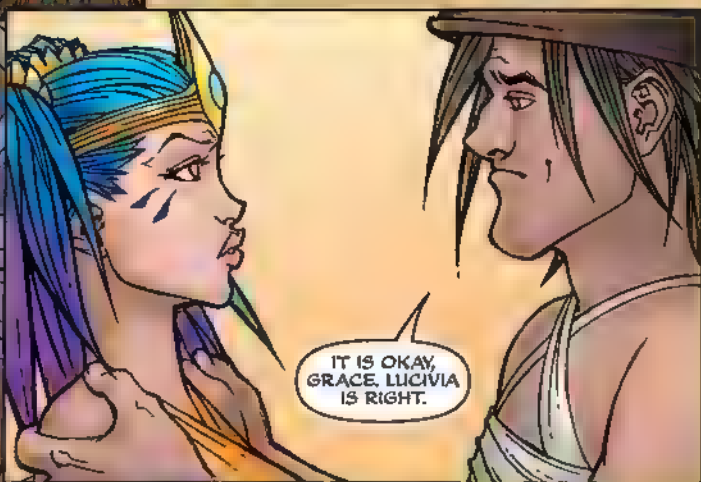
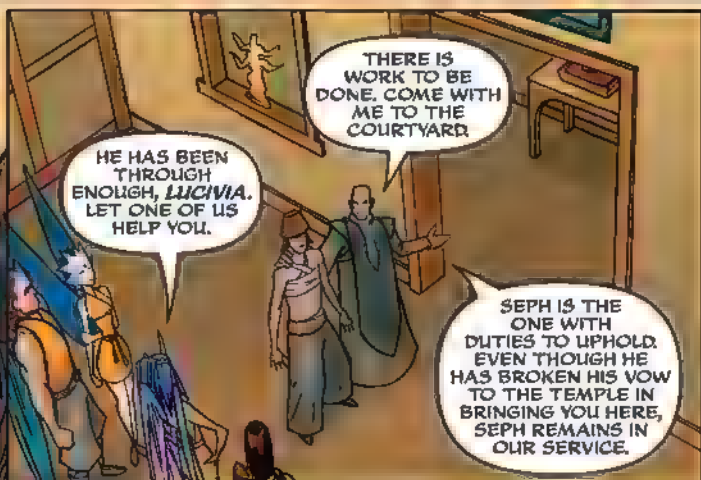
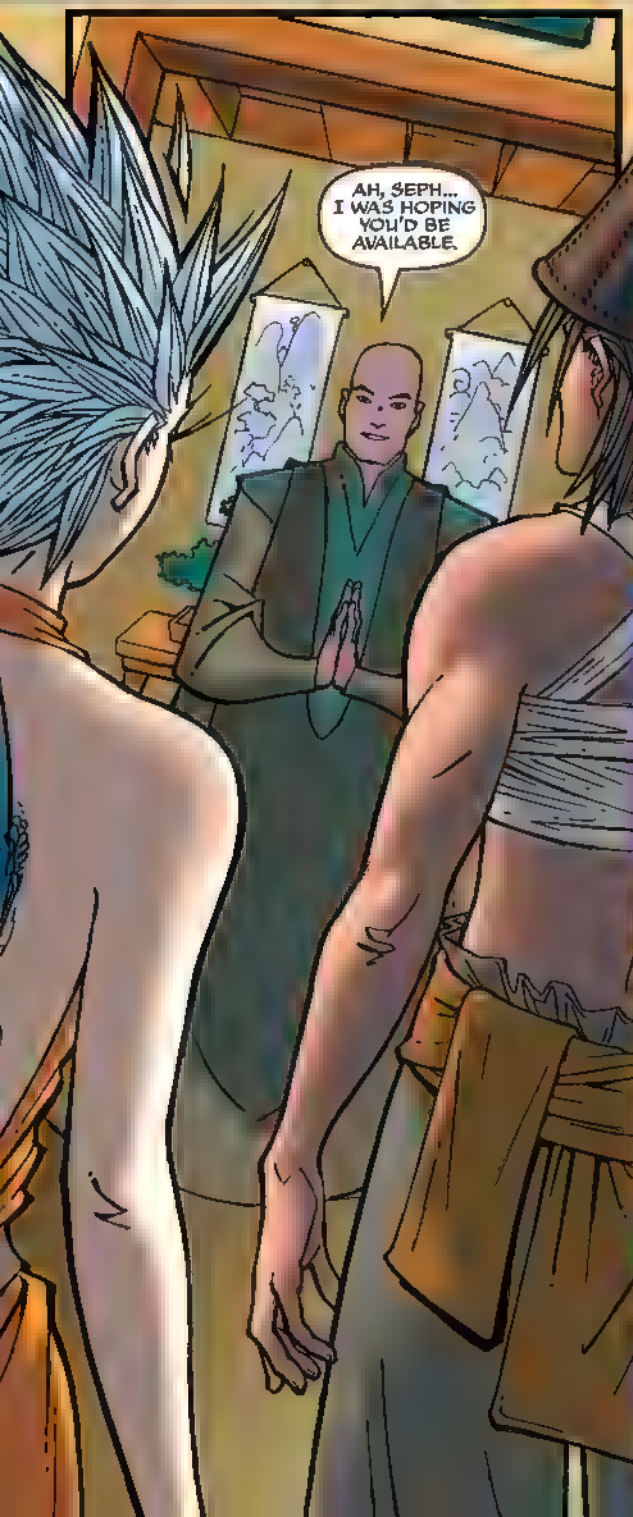
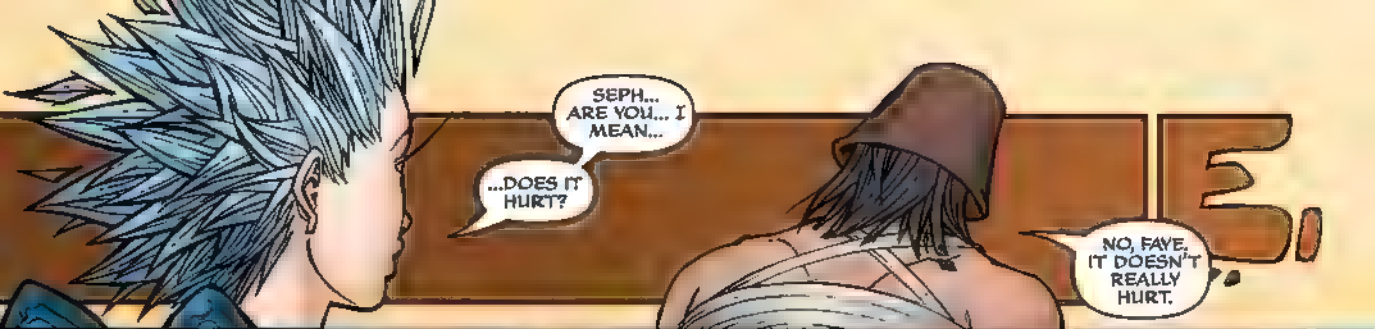
NOW THAT I HAVE COME TO KNOW THAT WHAT IS HAPPENING IS NO SICKNESS, BUT RATHER A GREAT FADING OF MAGIC ITSELF, MY FEAR HAS BEEN REPLACED WITH SIMPLE DREAD.

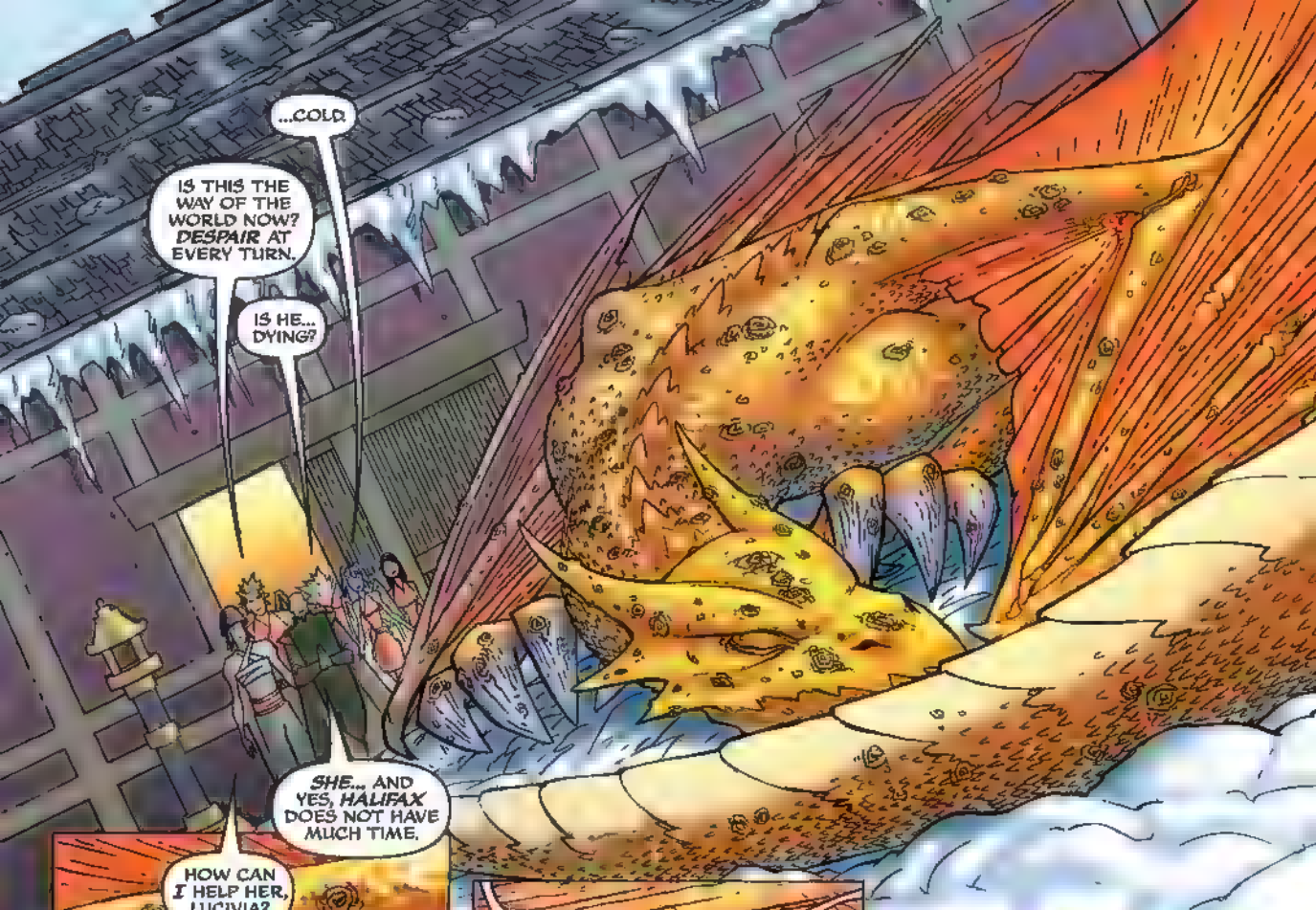
BECAUSE LOOKING AT SEPH, I KNOW THAT WE ARE ALL TO SUFFER AS HE DOES.

SEPH... IT... IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU ON YOUR FEET.









...COLD

IS THIS THE WAY OF THE WORLD NOW? DESPAIR AT EVERY TURN.

IS HE... DYING?

SHE... AND YES, HALIFAX DOES NOT HAVE MUCH TIME.

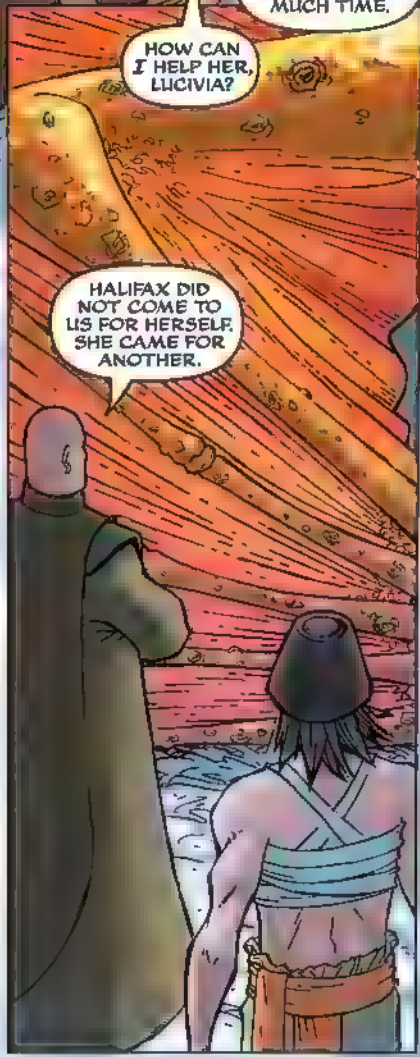
HOW CAN I HELP HER, LUCIVIA?

HALIFAX DID NOT COME TO US FOR HERSELF. SHE CAME FOR ANOTHER.

THIS IS HER DAUGHTER, DANDELION.

SHE IS SO... SMALL.

YES, AND SHE WILL NEED A LOT OF CARE. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW THE LOSS OF MAGIC WILL AFFECT ONE SO YOUNG, BUT WE MUST DO OUR BEST TO WATCH OVER HER-- FOR HALIFAX.

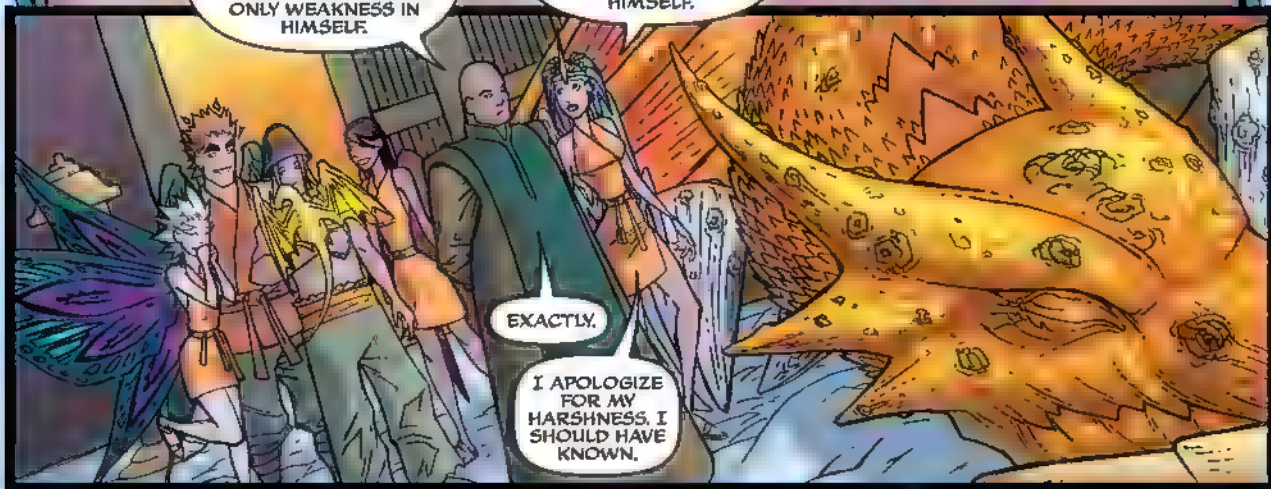




HEY THERE,
LITTLE ONE.

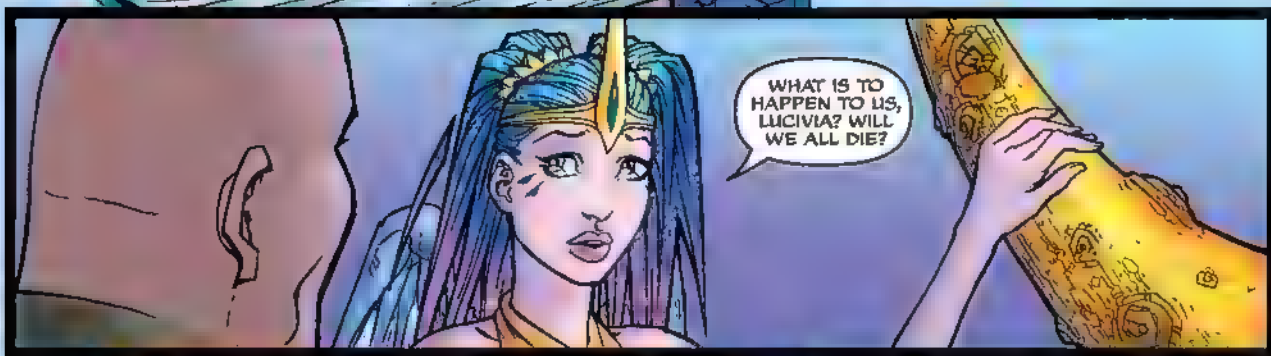
EVEN A SPIRIT
AS STRONG AS
SEPH'S CAN USE SOME
INCENTIVE AT A TIME
LIKE THIS. IN LOSING HIS
WINGS, SEPH LOST ALL
PURPOSE IN LIFE. HE SAW
ONLY WEAKNESS IN
HIMSELF.

I SEE. AND BY
GIVING HIM CHARGE
OVER DANDELION HE
WILL FIND STRENGTH IN
HIS DUTY. CARING FOR
ONE WEAKER THAN
HIMSELF.



EXACTLY.

I APOLOGIZE
FOR MY
HARSHNESS. I
SHOULD HAVE
KNOWN.



WHAT IS TO
HAPPEN TO US,
LUCIVIA? WILL
WE ALL DIE?

NOT ALL, BUT MANY. SOME WILL SURELY PASS ON BECAUSE THEY ARE FINISHED WITH THIS EXISTENCE AND WISH TO SEEK ANOTHER BEYOND OUR VIEW. THEY RELEASE ALL THE MAGIC WITHIN THEMSELVES AND GO WILLINGLY.

LIKE MY AUNT, THALIA.

YES, BUT MANY OTHERS WILL BE UNABLE TO COPE WITH THE LOSS OF MAGIC. THEY WILL FALL VICTIM TO THE FEAR AND THE MISERY, WALLOWING IN SELF-PITY AND ANGER. THE TOLL WILL BE TOO GREAT. THEIR SPIRIT WILL DIE AND THEIR BODY WILL FOLLOW.

BUT THE END OF MAGIC DOES NOT HAVE TO MEAN DEATH. THOSE WITH THE STRENGTH MAY Cherish WHAT MAGIC THEY CAN MAINTAIN AND ENDURE UNTIL THE CYCLE COMES FULL CIRCLE AND MAGIC RETURNS AGAIN TO THIS WORLD.

SO THERE IS A WAY TO BEAT THIS TURMOIL... THROUGH EMBRACING IT. PERHAPS *EMPYREA* AND THE REST OF MY PEOPLE CAN BE SAVED YET.

SEPH, OBVIOUSLY YOU ARE NEEDED HERE, BUT THE REST OF US MUST RETURN AT ONCE.

WHAT'S THE POINT? IF WHAT YOU SAID IS TRUE, THERE IS NO CURE FOR THIS SICKNESS.

THERE MAY BE NO CURE, *DEX*, BUT WE DO HAVE ONE GIFT TO BRING BACK WITH US.

WHAT?

HOPE.



IT IS A
QUIET DAY,
MY LORD.

TOO
QUIET.

PEOPLE ARE
MERELY KEEPING TO
THEMSELVES AS THEY
WAIT OUT THE STORM
THAT HAS DESCENDED
UPON MY KINGDOM. THEY
ARE BEING CAREFUL...
AS MUST WE ALL,
VINN.

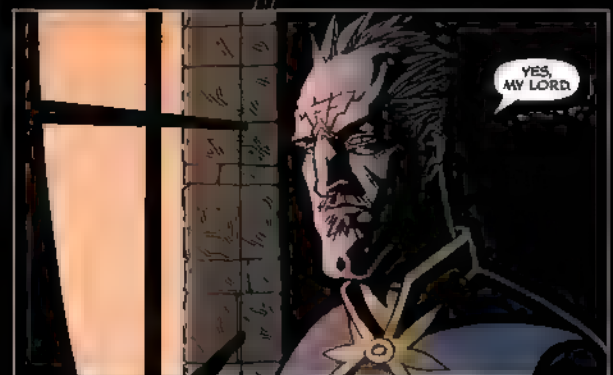


BUT AS ZANIS
SAID, PERHAPS THEY
ARE NOT HIDING FROM
ANY SICKNESS, BUT
HIDING FROM US, ALREADY
THE DUNGEONS BELOW ARE
FILLED WITH SUBJECTS SICK
AND DYING. CLEARLY, THIS
QUARANTINE IS ONLY
MAKING MATTERS
WORSE.

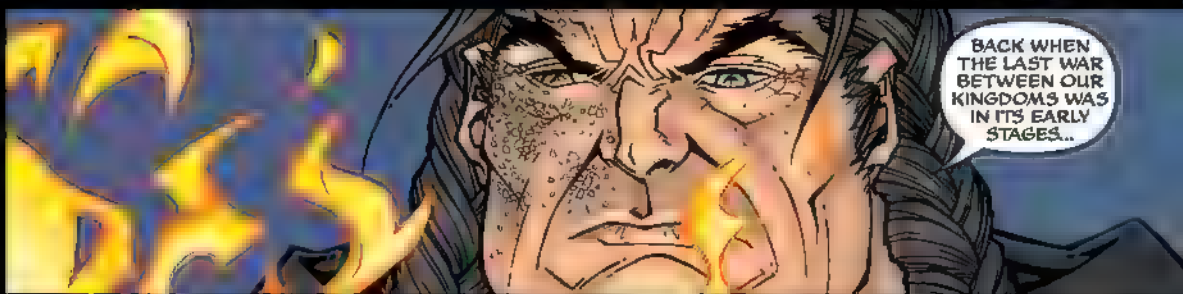
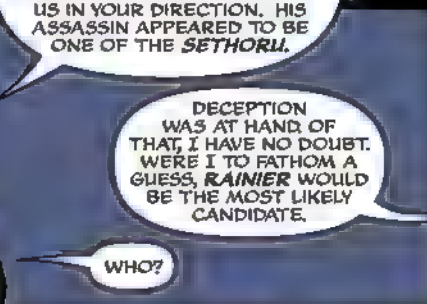
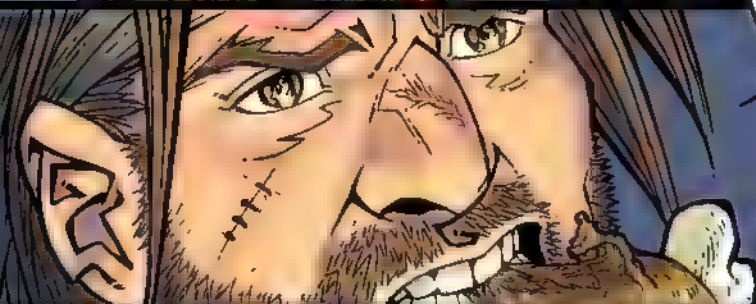
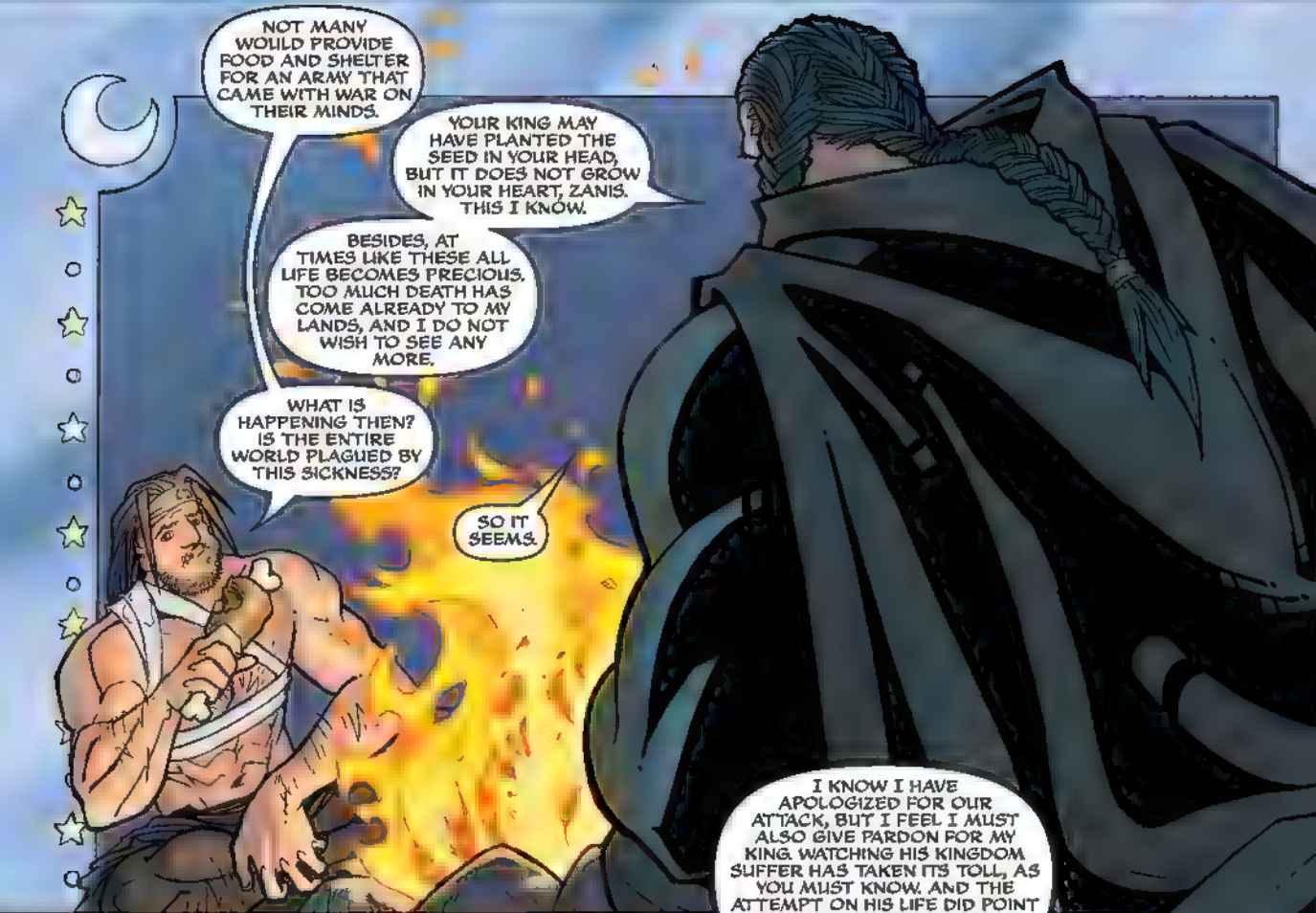


WHAT WOULD
BE WORSE WOULD BE
FOR THOSE INFECTED TO
RUN FREELY THROUGH THE
KINGDOM, CONTAMINATING
EVERYONE. WE MUST THINK
OF THE KINGDOM AS A
WHOLE, NOT JUST A FEW
OF ITS CITIZENS.

HAVE
FAITH, VINN. I
KNOW WHAT IS
BEST FOR MY
KINGDOM.



YES,
MY LORD.



...RAINIER
ARRIVED FROM ONE OF
MY OUTER VILLAGES
CRAWING A DESIRE TO HELP IN
THE CAUSE, AND HELP HE DID,
TRAINING SOME OF MY BEST
SOLDIERS AS WELL AS LEADING
THEM IN BATTLE. I IMAGINE YOU
MUST HAVE STARED ACROSS AT
HIM ON THE BATTLEFIELD
BEFORE, ZANIS.

WARFARE
CAME QUITE
NATURALLY
FOR HIM.

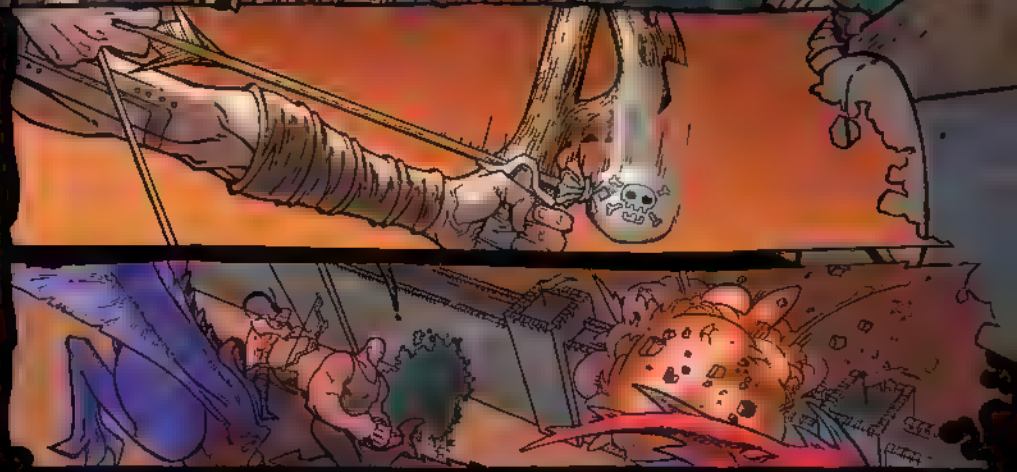
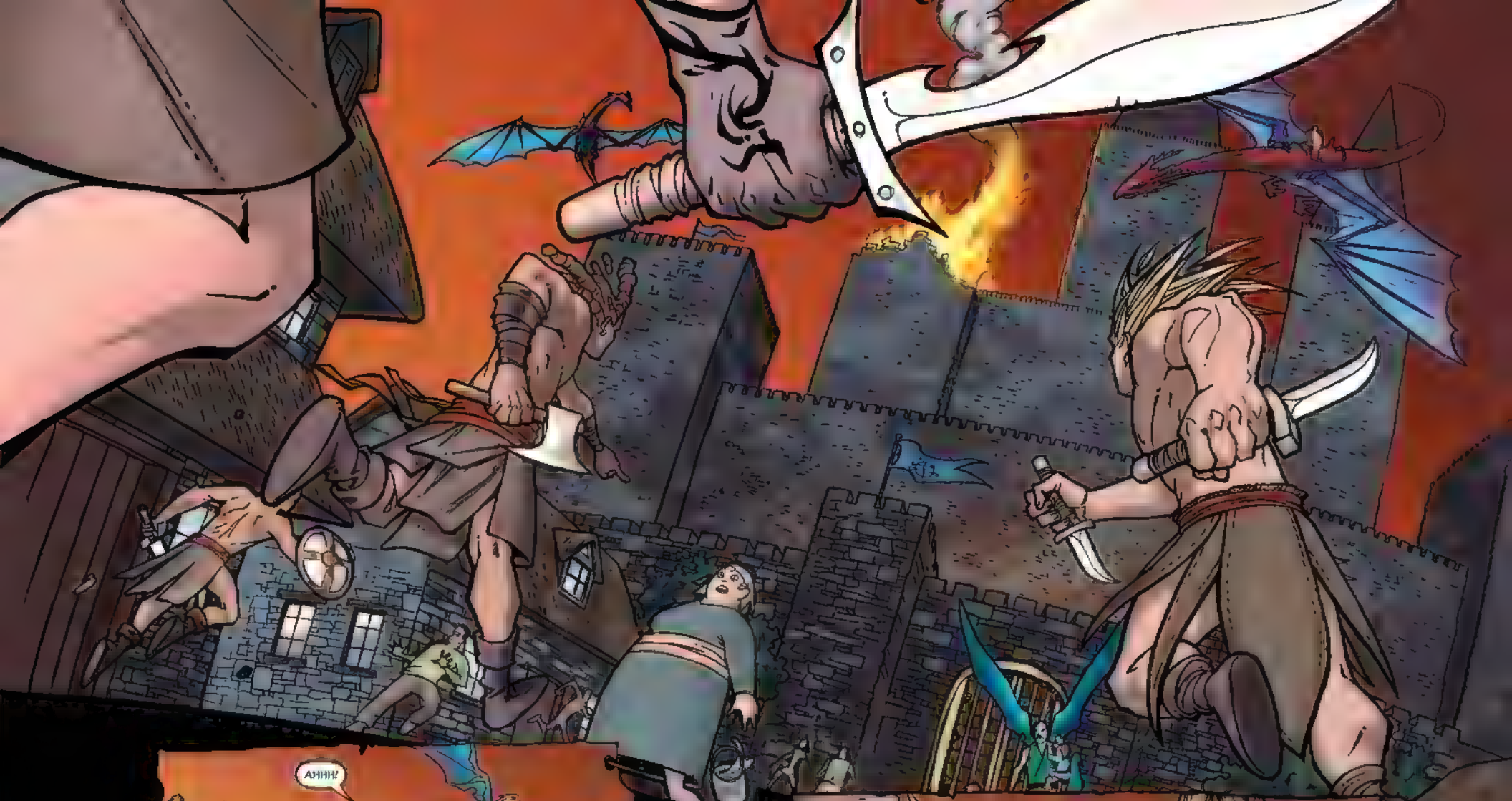
ONCE PEACE WAS
MADE WITH ARCADIA, RAINIER
SOUGHT TO UNDERMINE MY
DECISION AND EVEN TOOK STEPS
TOWARD ATTEMPTING TO OVERTHROW
THE CROWN ITSELF. APPARENTLY, RAINIER
VIEWED HIMSELF AS BEING BETTER
SUITED TO RULE. I BANISHED HIM
FROM ALL OF DELPHORA FOR HIS
TREACHERY.

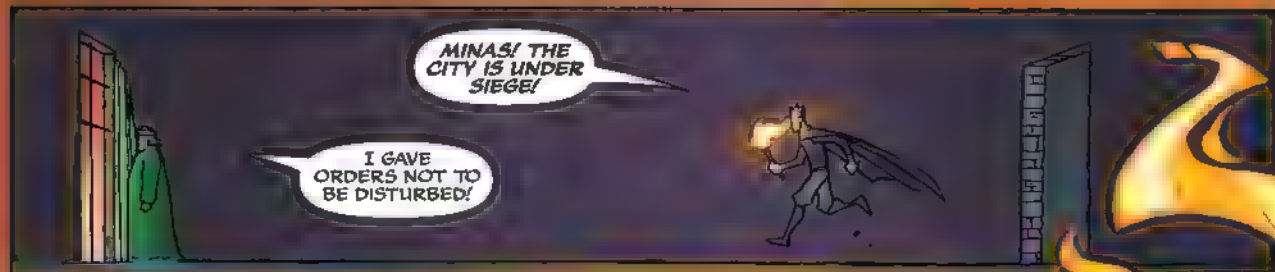
I SHOULD
HAVE REALIZED
THAT RAINIER
WOULD RETURN
SOMEDAY.

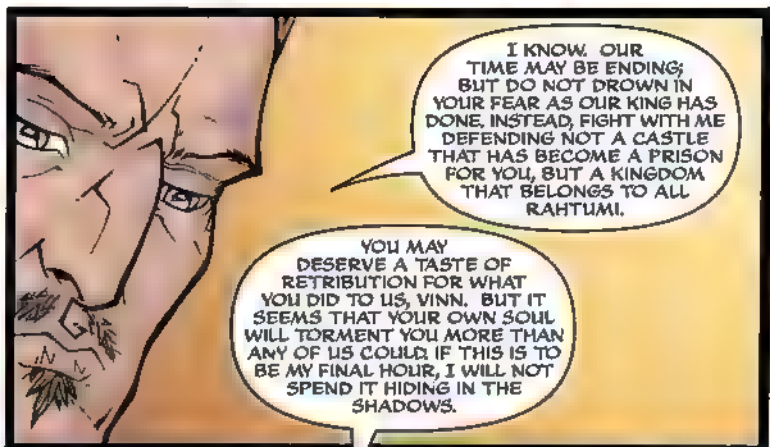
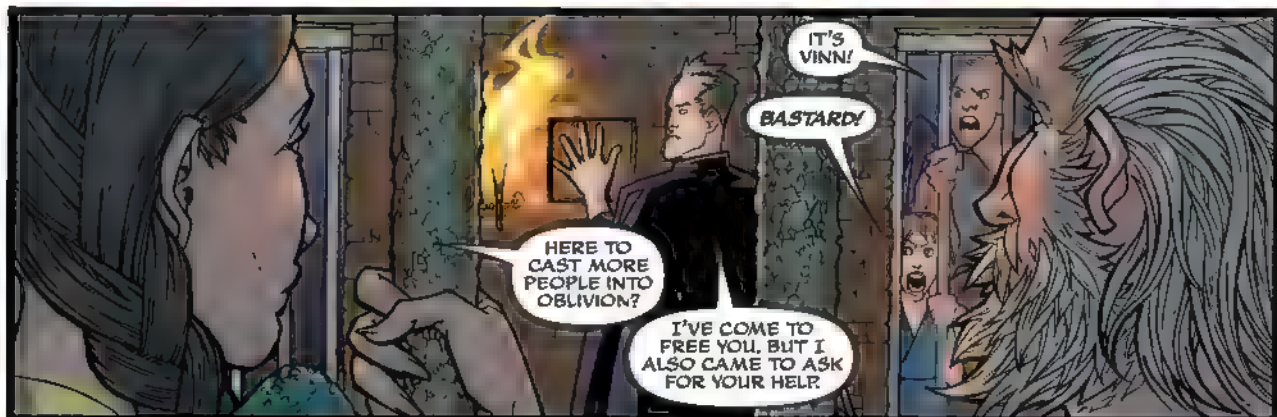
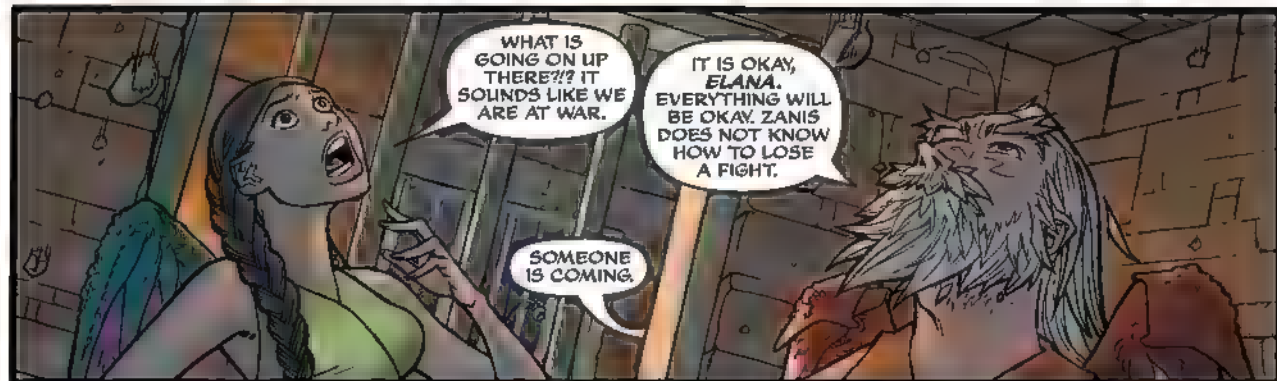
I DO NOT
KNOW WHERE SUCH
ANGER CAME FROM OR
WHEN HIS THIRST FOR
POWER BEGAN, BUT I
KNOW THAT IT WILL
NOT END UNTIL WE
DESTROY HIM...



...OR HE
DESTROYS
US.

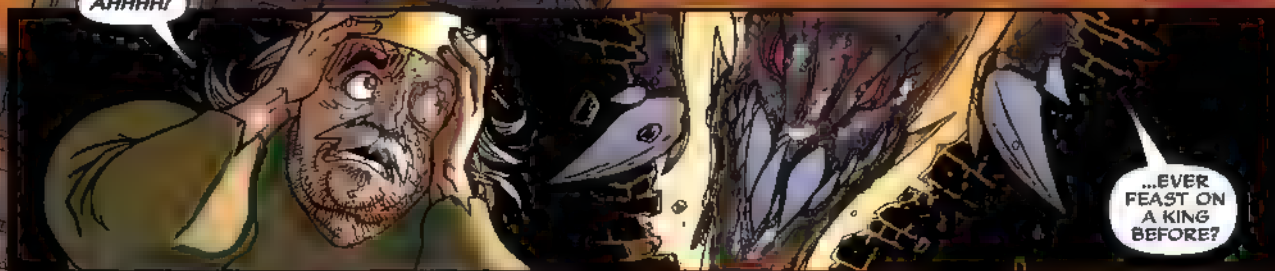






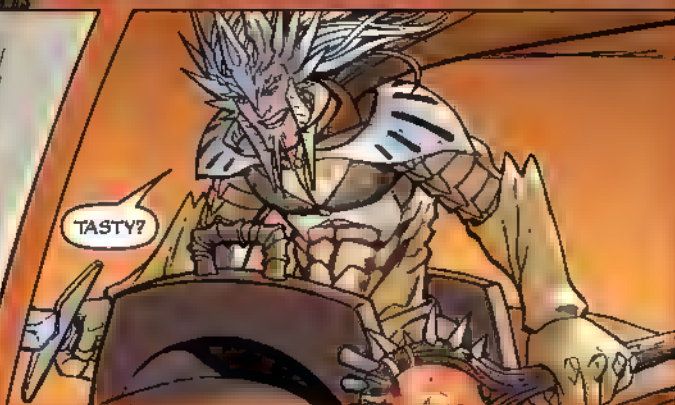


SO,
GRIMSON...

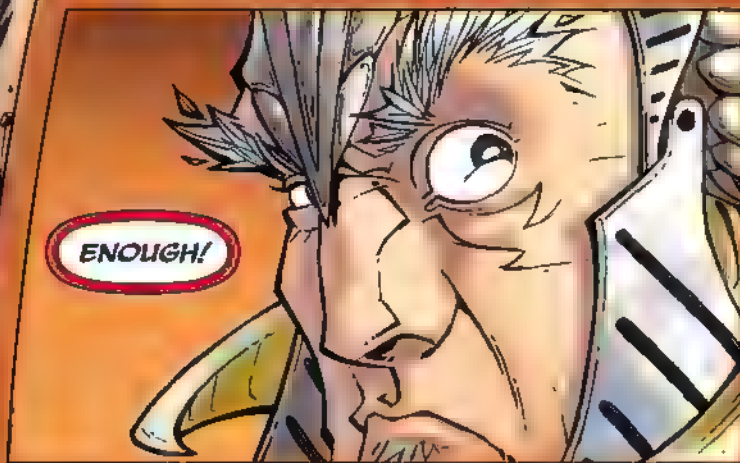


AHHHH!

...EVER
FEAST ON
A KING
BEFORE?



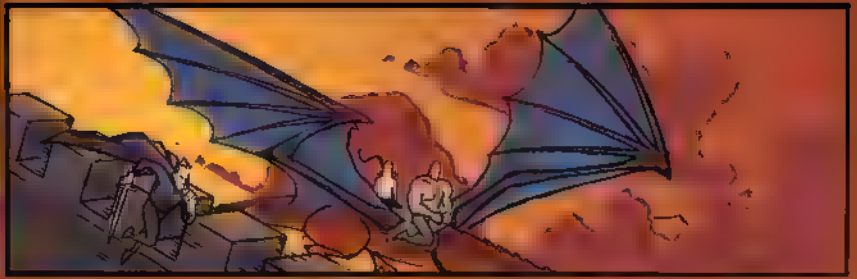
TASTY?

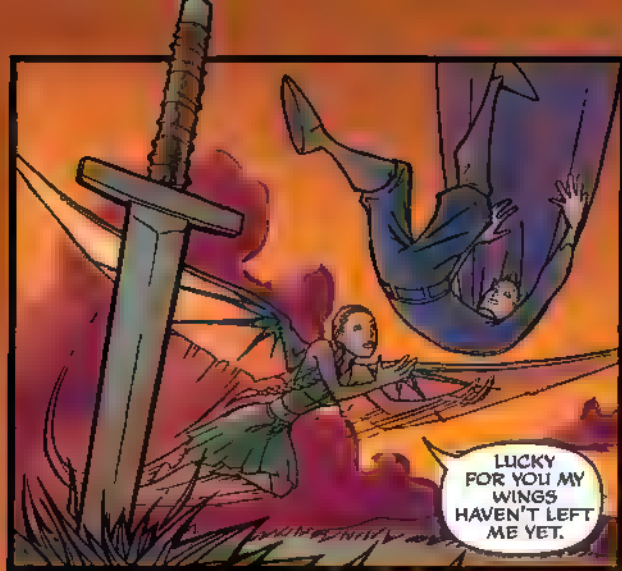


ENOUGH!

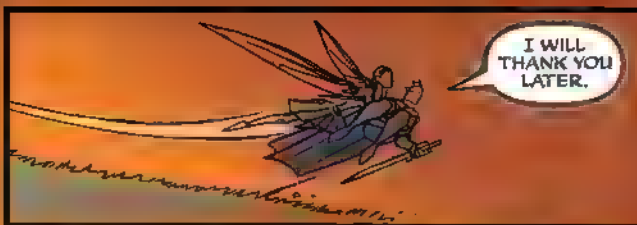


LET'S
SEE HOW YOU
HANDLE AN
OPPONENT THAT
DOES NOT FEAR
YOU OR YOUR
STEED.

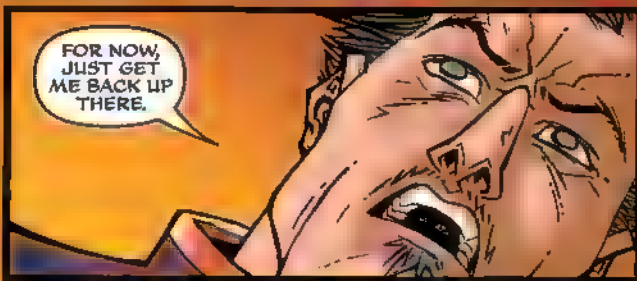




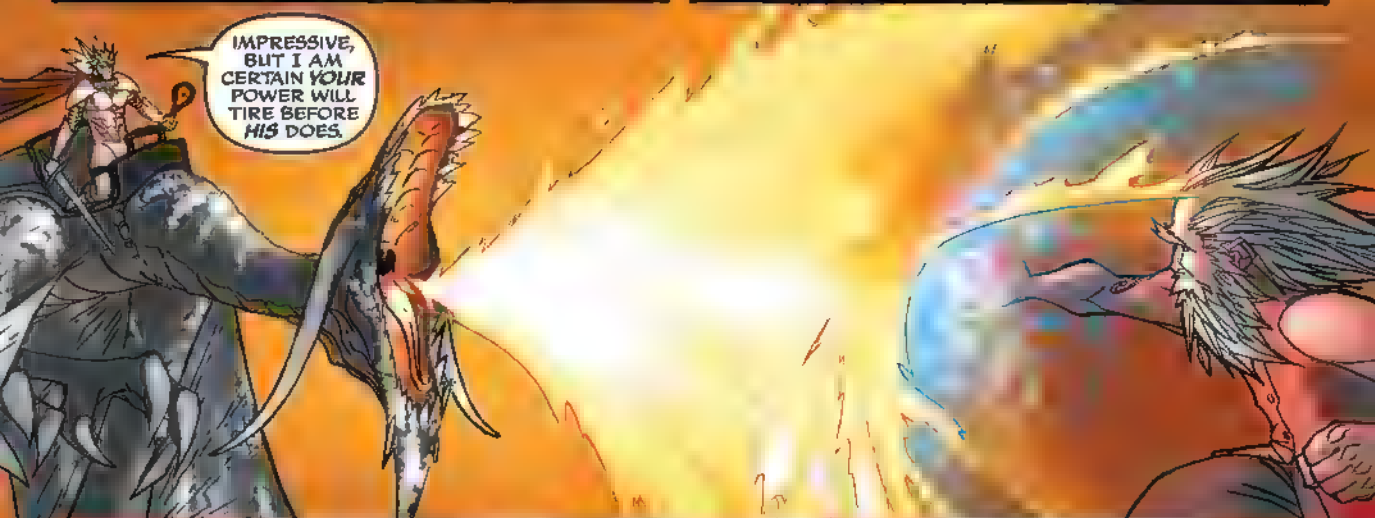
LUCKY FOR YOU MY WINGS HAVEN'T LEFT ME YET.



I WILL THANK YOU LATER.



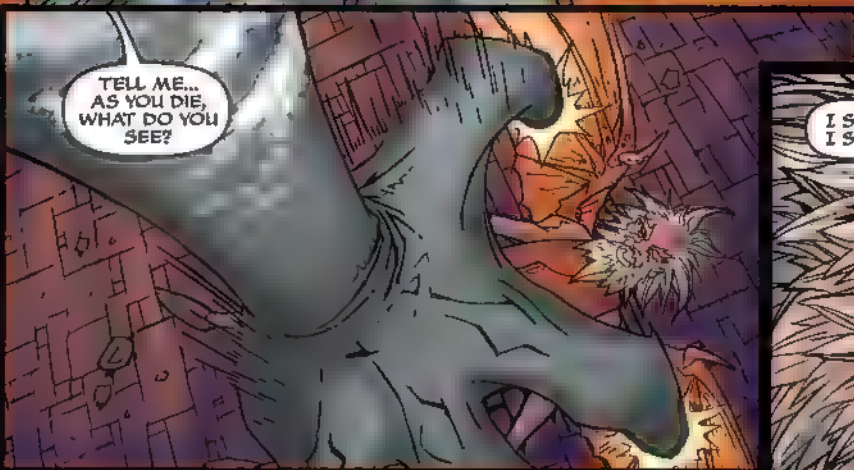
FOR NOW, JUST GET ME BACK UP THERE.



IMPRESSIVE, BUT I AM CERTAIN YOUR POWER WILL TIRE BEFORE HIS DOES.



OR MINE!



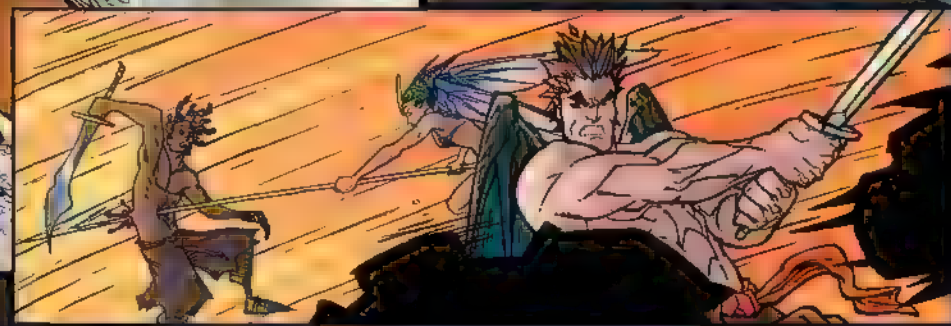
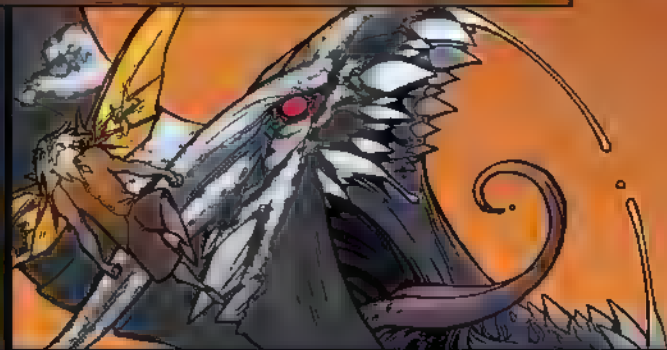
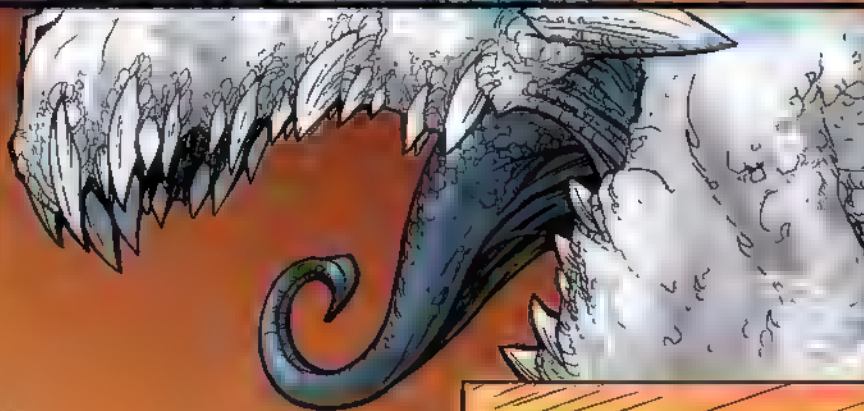
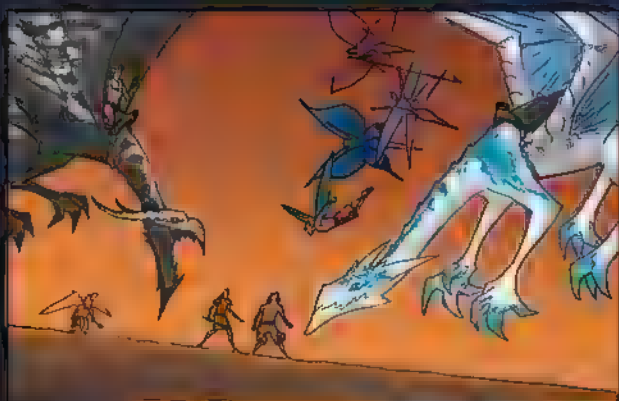
TELL ME... AS YOU DIE, WHAT DO YOU SEE?



I SEE... I SEE...

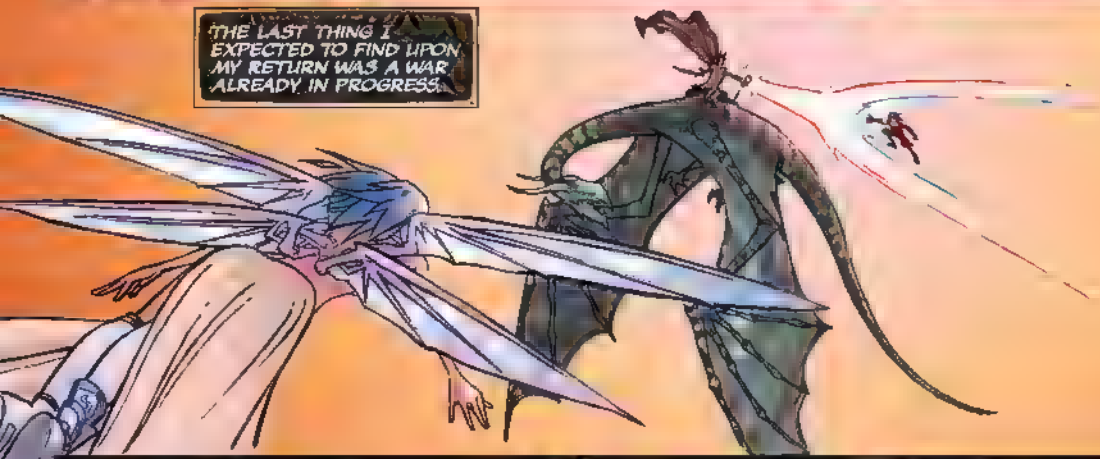


...REINFORCEMENTS.



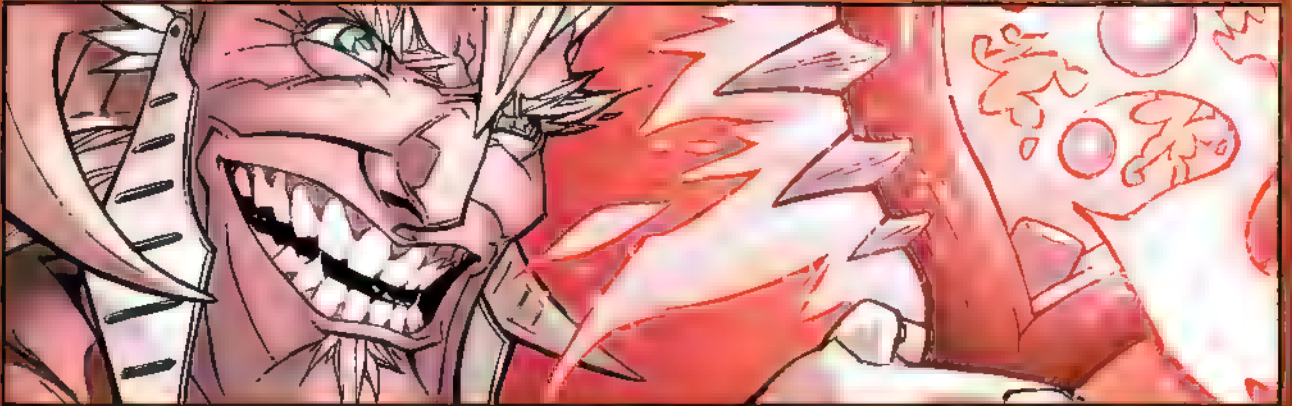


THE LAST THING I
EXPECTED TO FIND UPON
MY RETURN WAS A WAR
ALREADY IN PROGRESS.



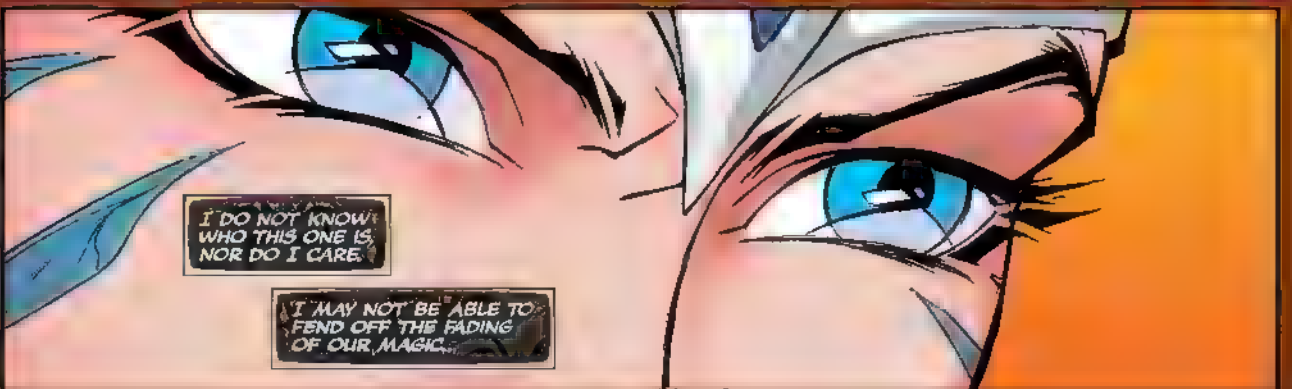
"ONLY THE MOST WRETCHED"
CREATURE WOULD USE THIS
TROUBLED TIME TO MOUNT
AN ASSAULT UPON OTHERS.

IT IS AS IF THE DARKNESS OF
OUR PERIL HAD MANIFESTED
ITSELF IN PHYSICAL FORM, SEEKING
TO DESTROY EVEN THE FRAGILE
HOPE WE MAY STILL CLING TO.



I DO NOT KNOW
WHO THIS ONE IS,
NOR DO I CARE.

I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO
FEND OFF THE FADING
OF OUR MAGIC.





...BUT I WILL STAND
AGAINST THIS KIND
OF EVIL UNTIL I DIE

TO BE
CONCLUDED
IN **SOUL FIRE #5**
DYING OF THE LIGHT

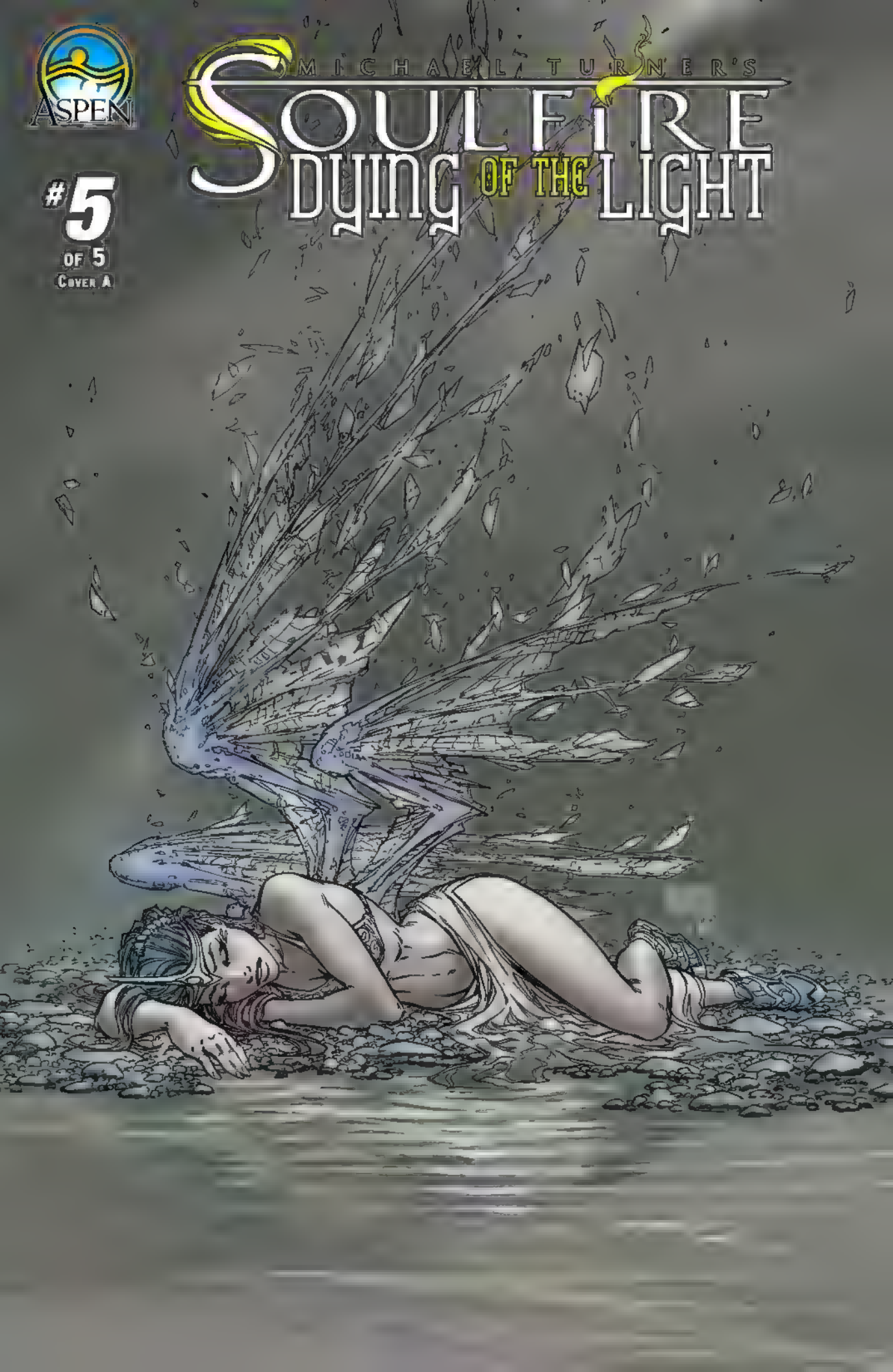


#5

OF 5

COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S
SOULFIRE
DYING OF THE LIGHT



SOULFIRE™ CREATED BY



SOULFIRE™ CREATED BY:
MICHAEL TURNER



a tale of magic by

J.T. KRUL
words
MICHAEL TURNER
—co-plot

MICAH GUNNELL
pictures

BETH SOTELO
& DAVID MORAN
—colors

DREAMER DESIGN
letters

SOULFIRE: DYING OF THE LIGHT ISSUE FIVE OF FIVE

Digital Editors: FRANK MASTROMAURO, VINCE HERNANDEZ | Design and Production: JOSH REED, MARK ROSLAN, PETER STRIGERWALD | Lettering font designed by: DREAMER DESIGN

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SOULFIRE: DYING OF THE LIGHT™ Vol. 1 Issue 5

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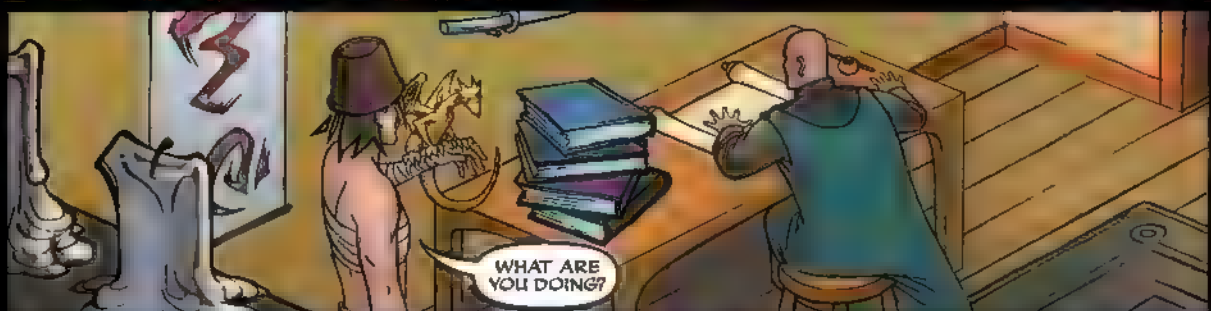
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DID YOU SEE
THAT, LUCIVIA?
DANDELION SPIT
HER FIRST FIRE...
DIDN'T YOU,
DANDY?



WHAT ARE
YOU DOING?



THIS AGE
IS ENDING.



OUR WORLD
IS CHANGING
AND WE MUST
CHANGE WITH
IT...



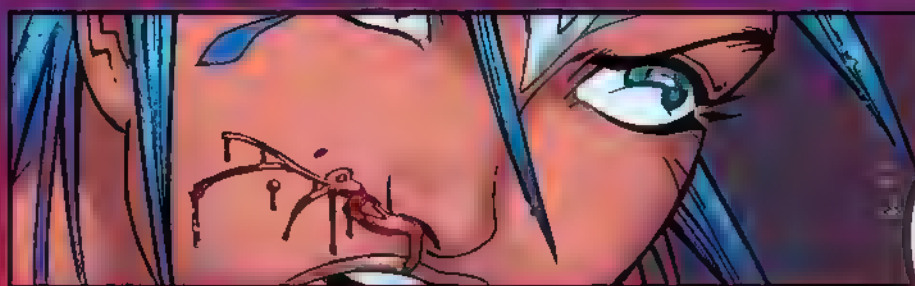
...OR ALL
WE HOLD
DEAR WILL BE
DESTROYED
FOREVER.



I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR THIS. THE VERY **EXISTENCE** OF OUR WORLD IS IN JEOPARDY—IT WILL AFFECT BOTH THE **RAHTUMI** AND THE **SETHORU**.

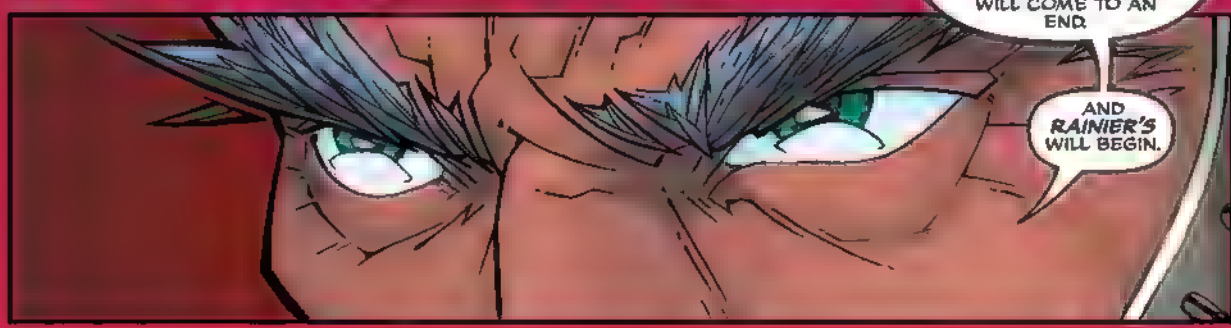


I KNOW. IT IS MY **DESTINY** THAT APPROACHES. BOTH KINGDOMS HAVE DOMINATED THEIR LANDS FROM THE AIR—SOARING ON MAGICAL WINGS FOR YEARS. BUT THAT IS ALL ABOUT TO CHANGE.

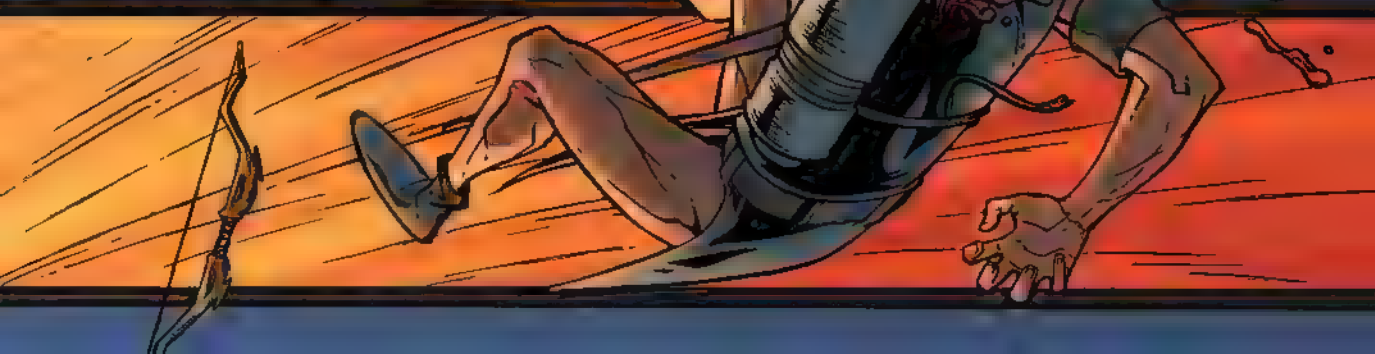
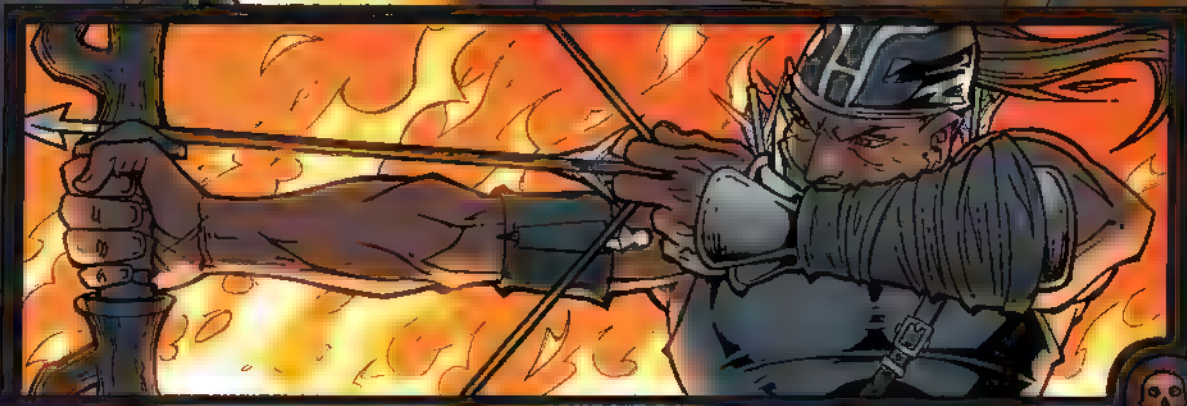


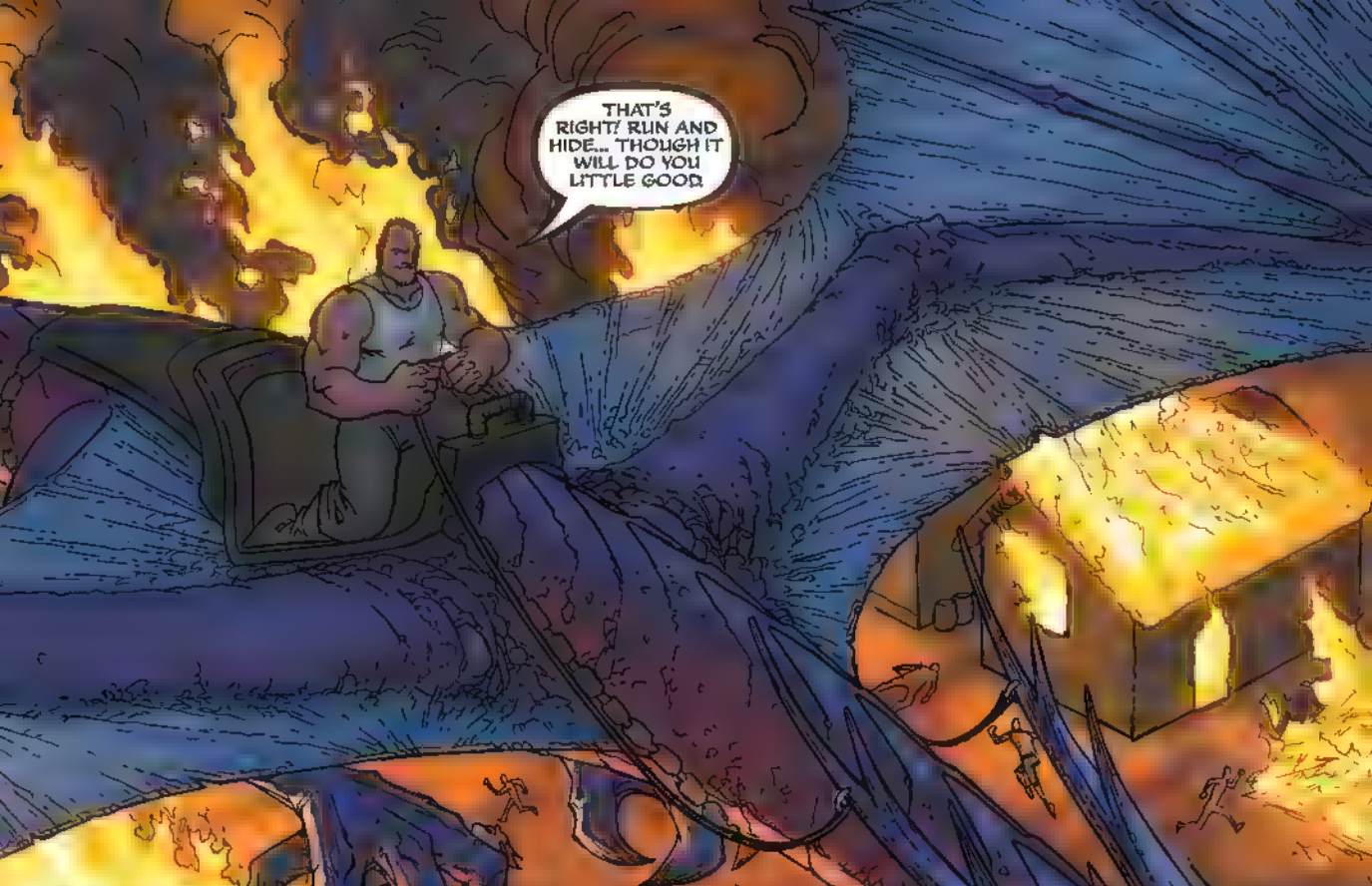
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. THIS AGE OF MAGIC IS ENDING.

I UNDERSTAND COMPLETELY. THE **GREAT FALL** IS UPON US. WHEN WE ARE ALL FIRMLY GROUNDED TO THE EARTH, THE **RAHTUMI** AND THE **SETHORU** WILL BE NO MORE. THE REIGN OF THE **ORNOH** AND **MINAS** WILL COME TO AN END.

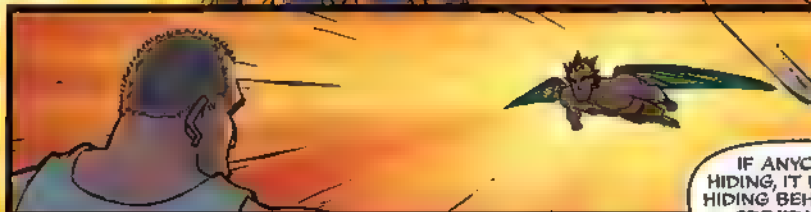


AND **RAINIER'S** WILL BEGIN.





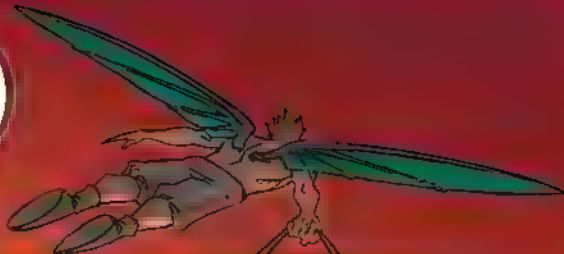
THAT'S
RIGHT! RUN AND
HIDE... THOUGH IT
WILL DO YOU
LITTLE GOOD



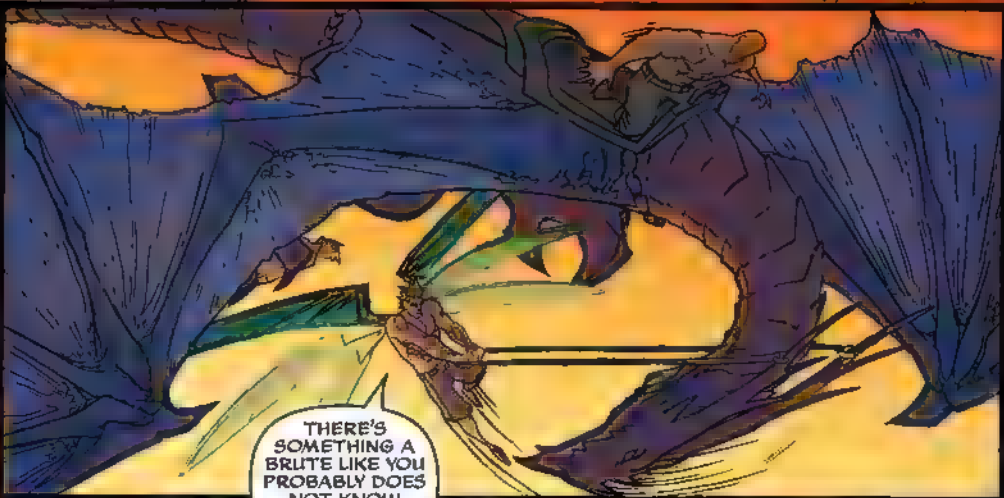
IF ANYONE IS
HIDING, IT IS *YOU*--
HIDING BEHIND THIS
CREATURE OF
YOURS.



RAAWRRR!



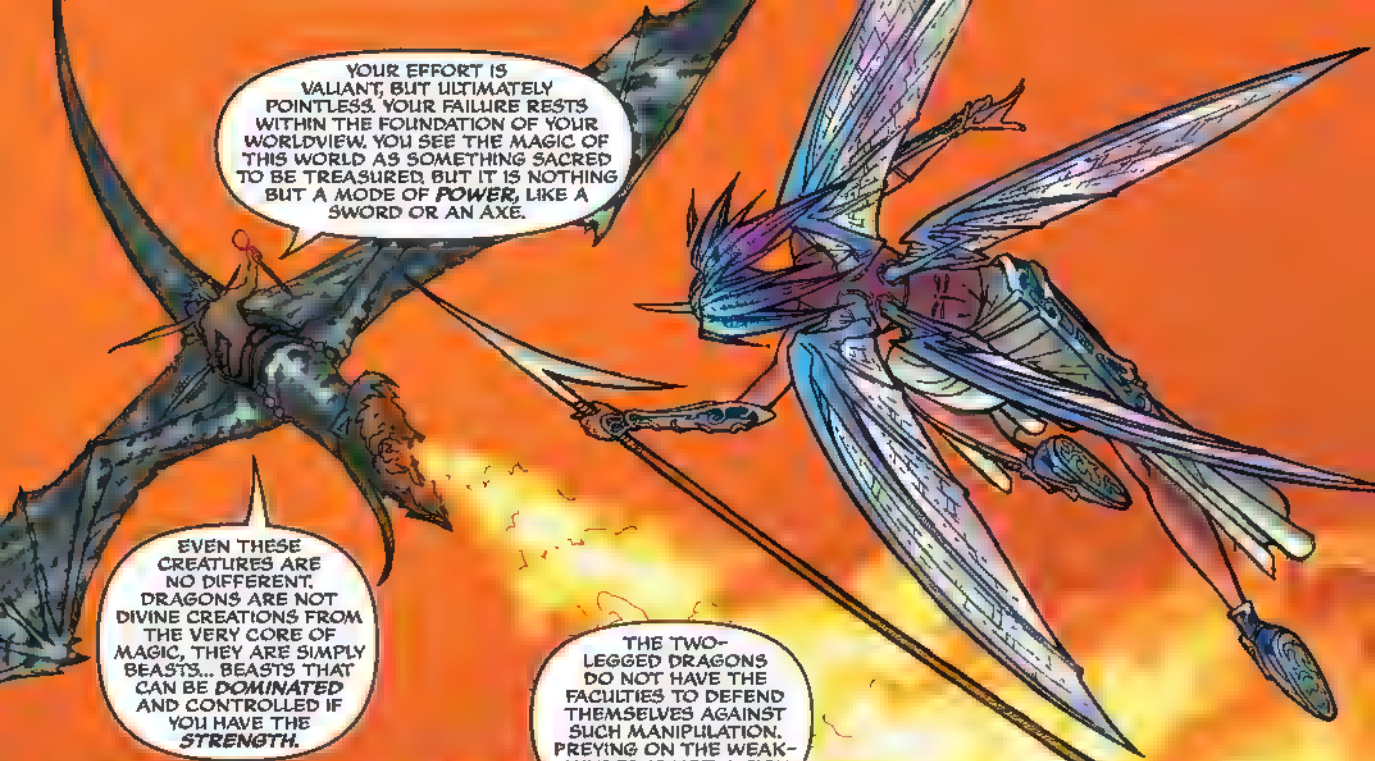
COWARD!
COME BACK
HERE SO I CAN
TEAR THOSE WINGS
OFF WITH MY
BARE HANDS.



THERE'S
SOMETHING A
BRUTE LIKE YOU
PROBABLY DOES
NOT KNOW
ABOUT
FLYING...



...LANDINGS
CAN BE
ROUGH.



YOUR EFFORT IS
VALIANT, BUT ULTIMATELY
POINTLESS. YOUR FAILURE RESTS
WITHIN THE FOUNDATION OF YOUR
WORLDVIEW. YOU SEE THE MAGIC OF
THIS WORLD AS SOMETHING SACRED
TO BE TREASURED, BUT IT IS NOTHING
BUT A MODE OF **POWER**, LIKE A
SWORD OR AN AXE.

EVEN THESE
CREATURES ARE
NO DIFFERENT.
DRAGONS ARE NOT
DIVINE CREATIONS FROM
THE VERY CORE OF
MAGIC, THEY ARE SIMPLY
BEASTS... BEASTS THAT
CAN BE **DOMINATED**
AND CONTROLLED IF
YOU HAVE THE
STRENGTH.

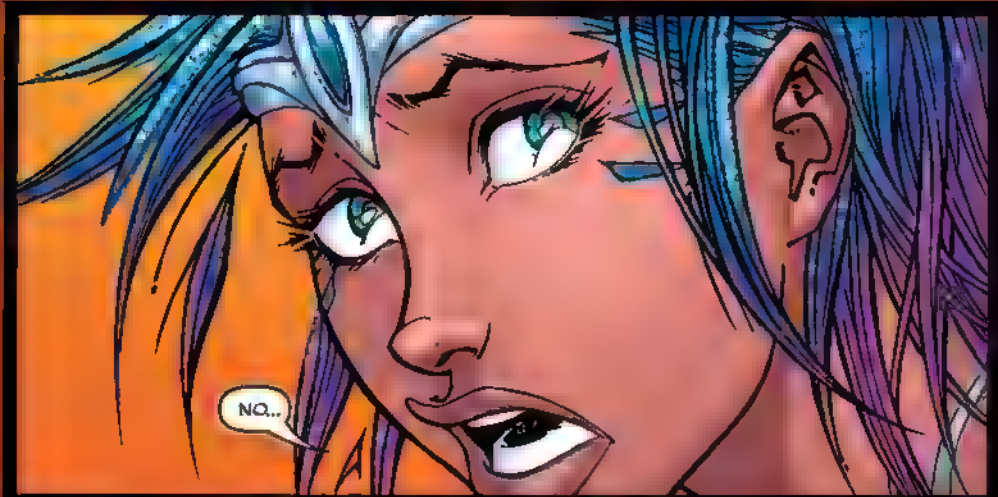
THE TWO-
LEGGED DRAGONS
DO NOT HAVE THE
FACILITIES TO DEFEND
THEMSELVES AGAINST
SUCH MANIPULATION.
PREYING ON THE WEAK-
MINDED IS NOT A SIGN
OF STRENGTH.



SLAVES
ARE NOT
SOLDIERS.



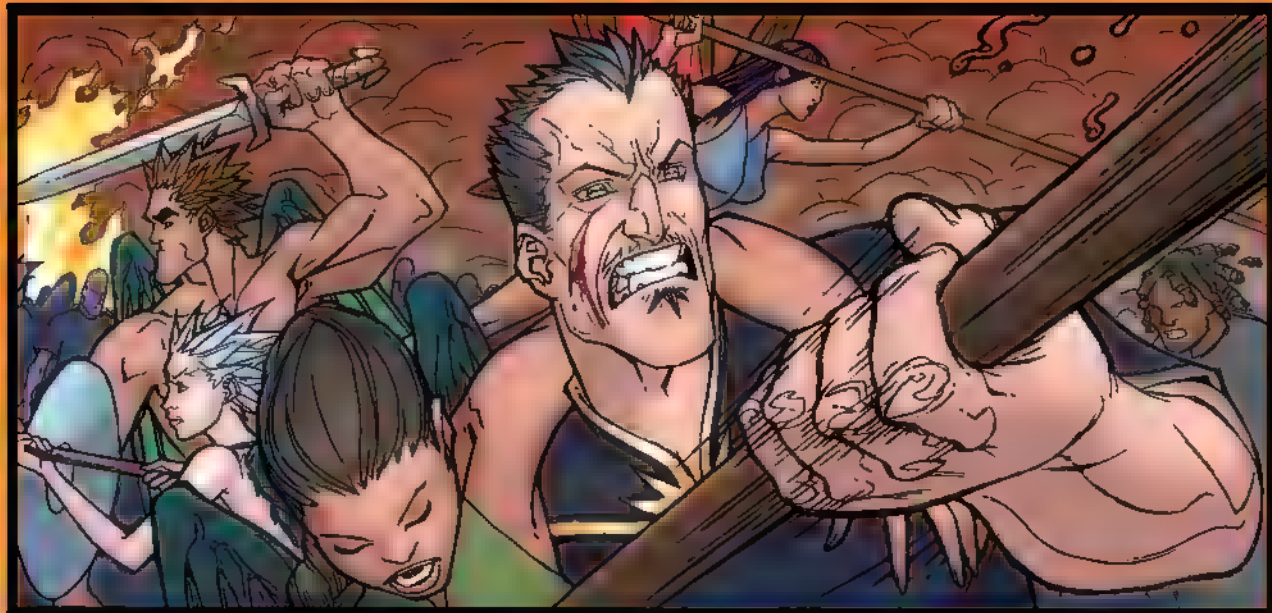
YOU
HAVE NO
IDEA.

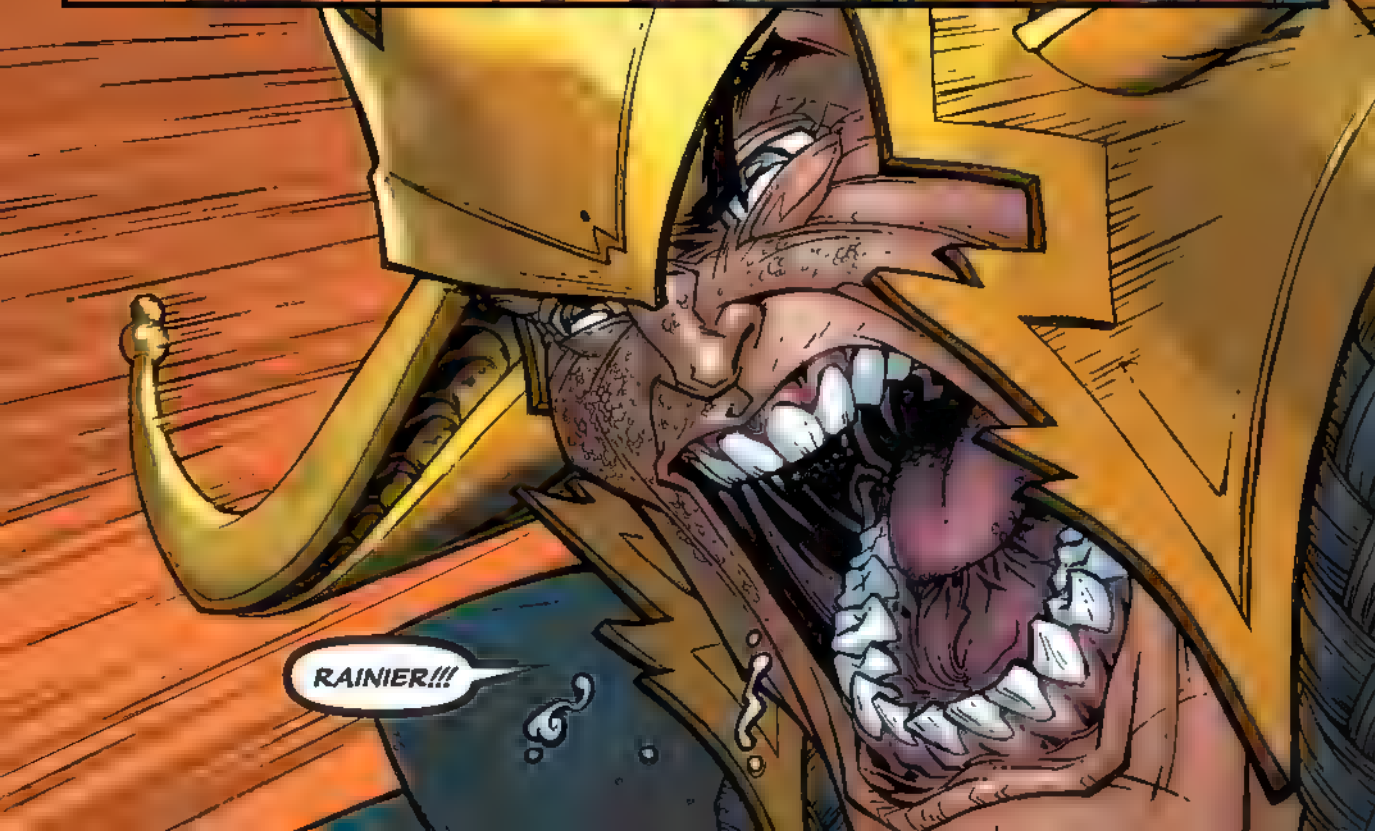
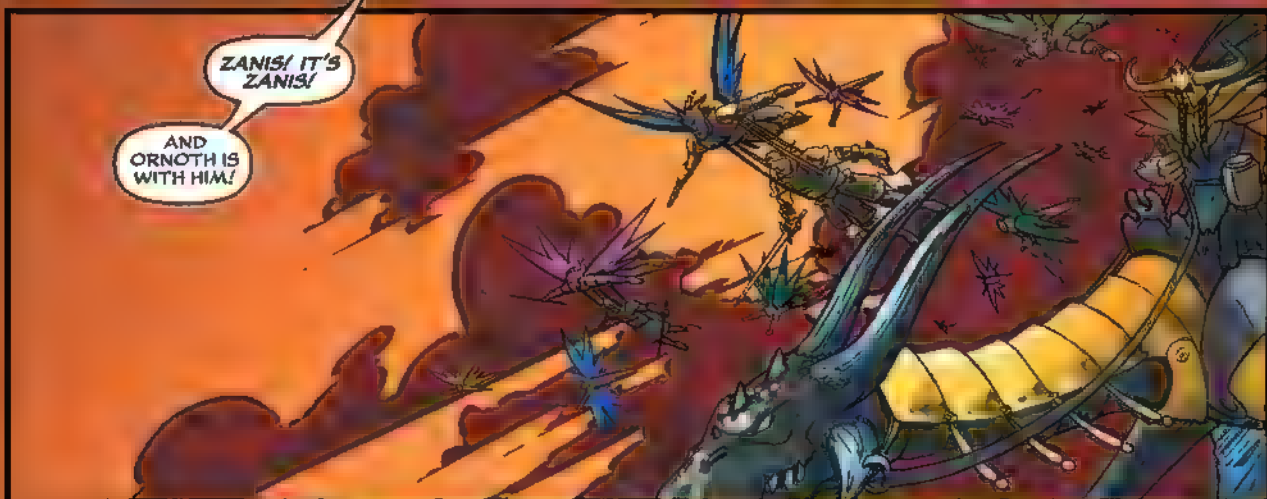
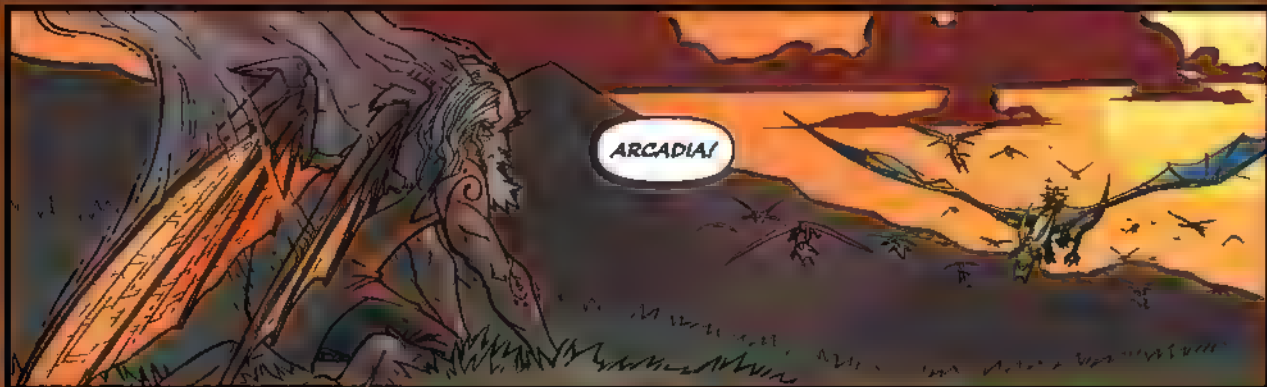
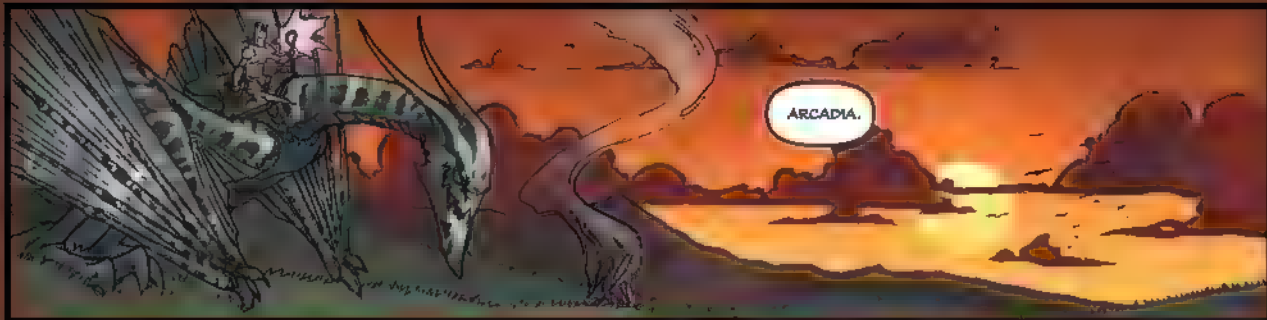


NO...



...MOONCREST.
MY... MY FRIEND







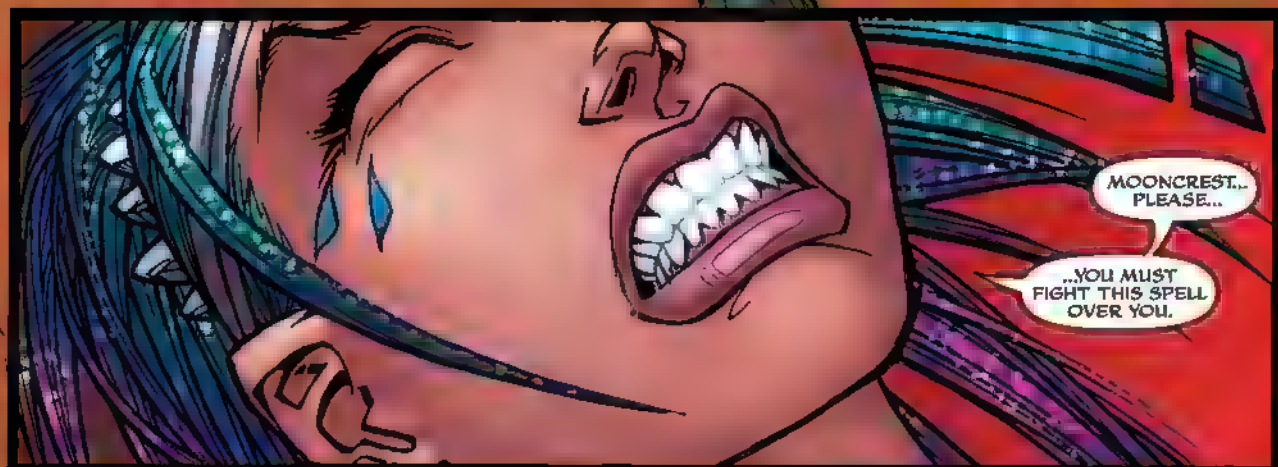
YOU SHOULD
HAVE STAYED HIDDEN
IN THE SHADOWS.
FIGHTING HONORABLY
ON THE BATTLEFIELD IS
OBVIOUSLY NOT YOUR
STYLE.

WE EACH
HAVE OUR OWN
METHODS OF
ENGAGEMENT. ORNOTH,
I WILL LIVE WITH MINE,
AND YOU CAN DIE
WITH YOURS.



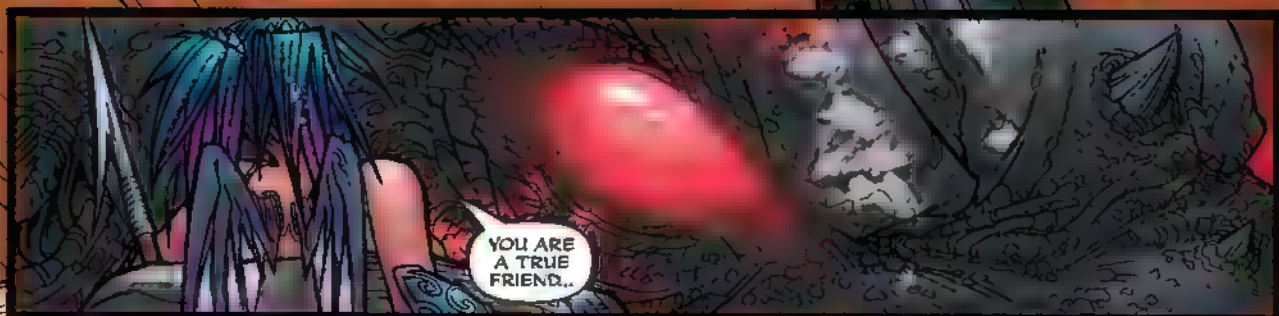
RWHAAA!!

FOR
ARCADIA!!

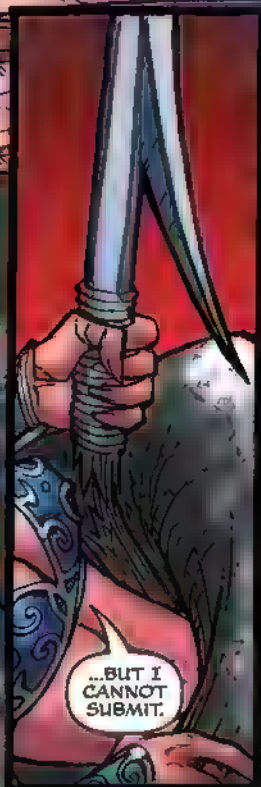


MOONCREST...
PLEASE...

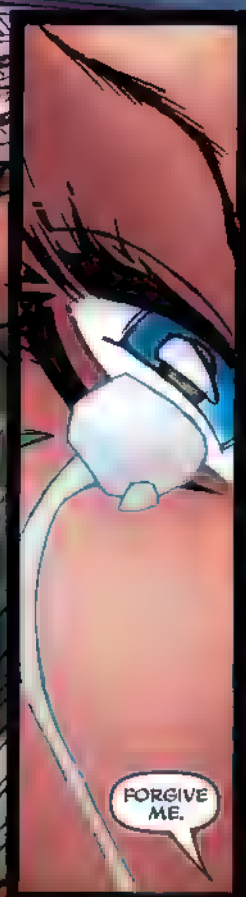
...YOU MUST
FIGHT THIS SPELL
OVER YOU.



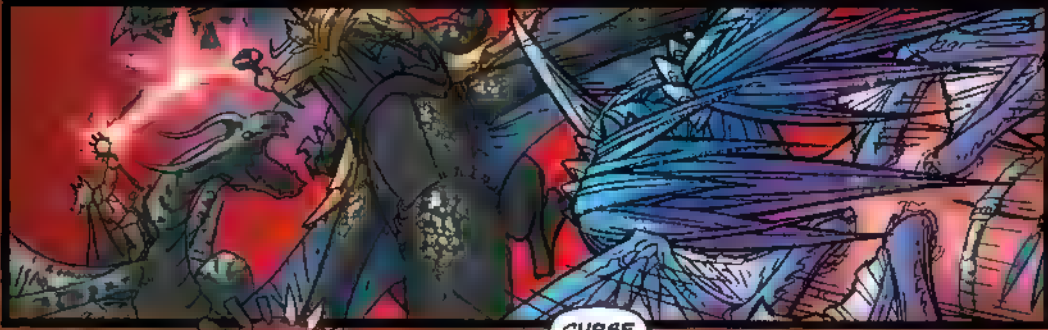
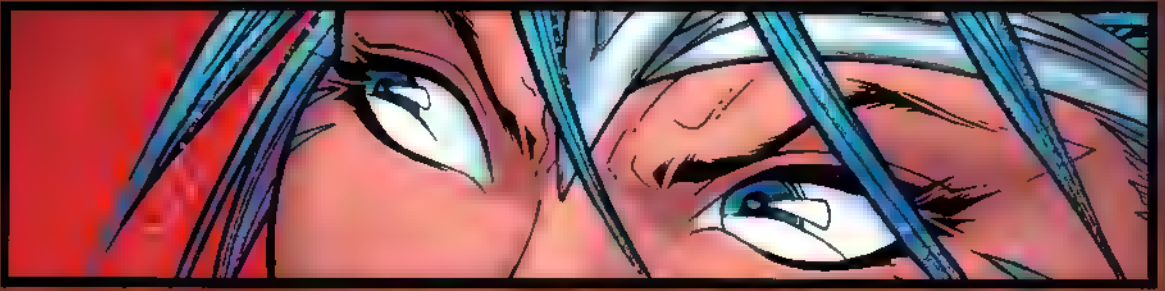
YOU ARE
A TRUE
FRIEND...



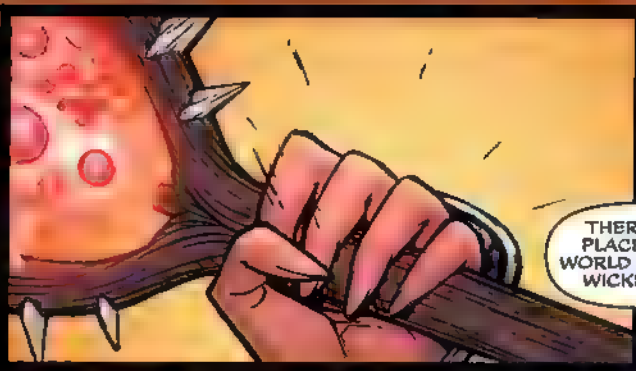
...BUT I
CANNOT
SUBMIT.



FORGIVE
ME.



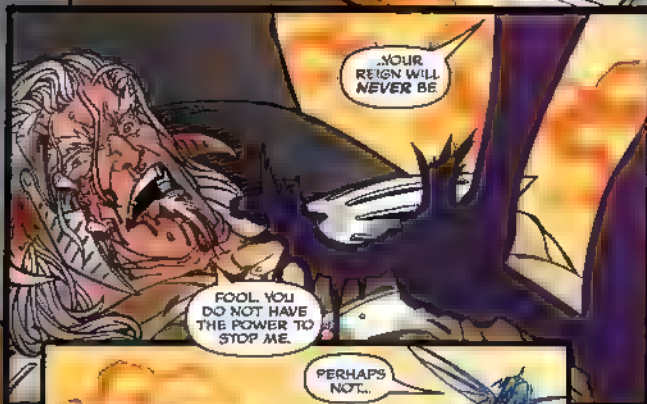
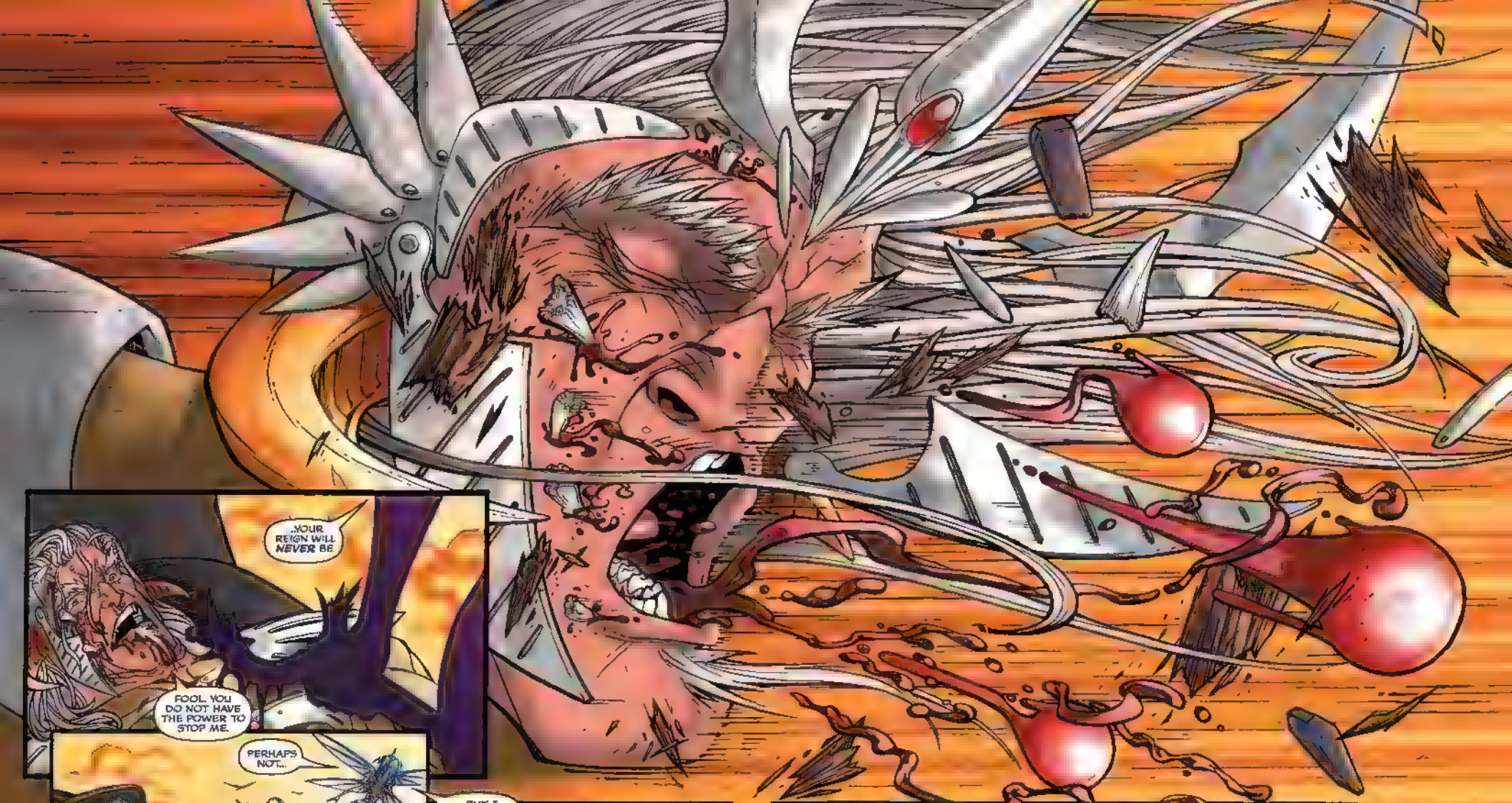
CURSE
YOU!

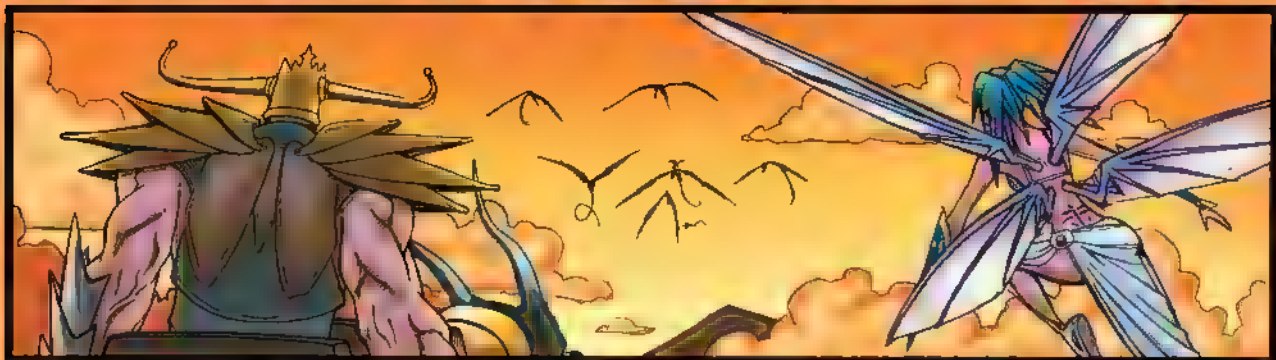
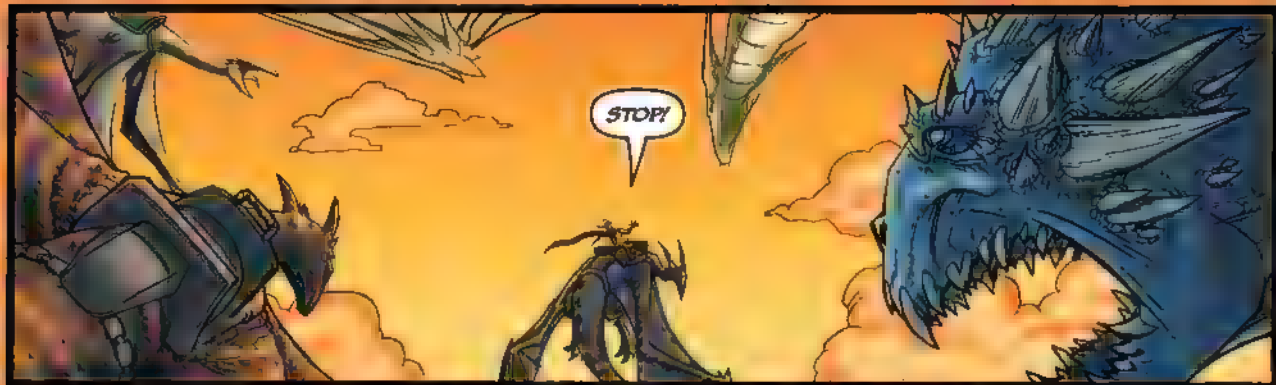


THERE IS NO
PLACE IN ANY
WORLD FOR YOUR
WICKEDNESS.



NO MATTER
WHAT THE END
OF MAGIC WILL
BRING FOR ME, AS
LONG AS MY HEART
CONTINUES TO
BEAT...





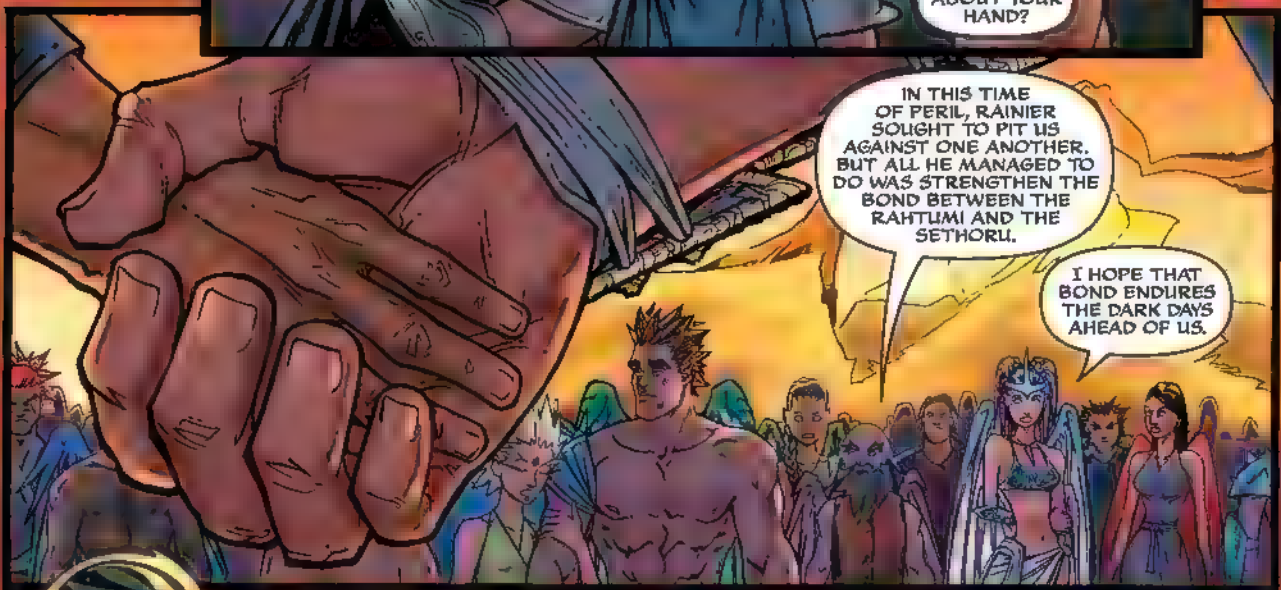


KING ORNOTH,
MAY I PRESENT
TO YOU VINN—
CHANCELLOR OF
ARCADIA.

YOUR NOBLE
DEEDS THIS DAY
SHAME OUR RECENT
ACTIONS, KING ORNOTH.
WITH MINAS GONE AND
THE KINGDOM NEARLY
DESTROYED, I HAVE LITTLE
TO OFFER AN ALLY
SUCH AS YOU.



HOW
ABOUT YOUR
HAND?

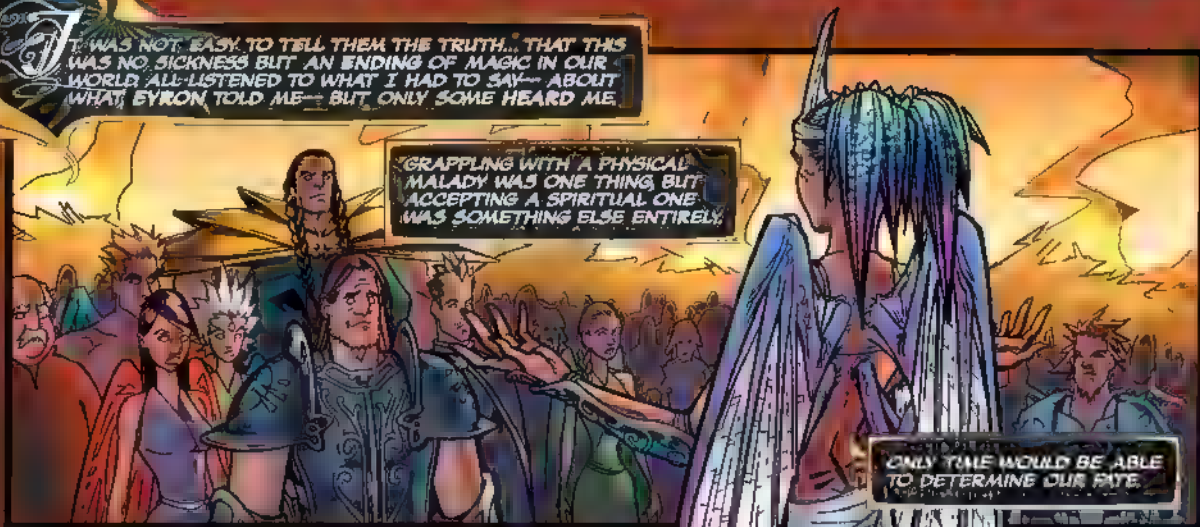


IN THIS TIME
OF PERIL, RAINIER
SOUGHT TO PIT US
AGAINST ONE ANOTHER.
BUT ALL HE MANAGED TO
DO WAS STRENGTHEN THE
BOND BETWEEN THE
RAHTUMI AND THE
SETHORU.

I HOPE THAT
BOND ENDURES
THE DARK DAYS
AHEAD OF US.

IT WAS NOT EASY TO TELL THEM THE TRUTH... THAT THIS
WAS NO SICKNESS BUT AN ENDING OF MAGIC IN OUR
WORLD. ALL LISTENED TO WHAT I HAD TO SAY— ABOUT
WHAT EYRON TOLD ME— BUT ONLY SOME HEARD ME.

GRAPPLING WITH A PHYSICAL
MALADY WAS ONE THING BUT
ACCEPTING A SPIRITUAL ONE
WAS SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY.



ONLY TIME WOULD BE ABLE
TO DETERMINE OUR FATE.

SOME WOULD FIND SUPPORT
IN EACH OTHER TO COPE
WITH THE LOSS AND
CHERISH WHAT REMAINED.



OTHERS WOULD GO
WILLINGLY INTO THE NEXT
WORLD, LOOKING TO FIND
WHAT THIS ONE NO
LONGER HELD FOR THEM.



SOME WOULD PRESERVE
THE LAST GLIMMERS OF
THEIR MAGIC IN THE HOPES
THAT THEY MIGHT BE ABLE
TO SERVE THE FUTURE
LEADERS OF THE WORLD
AND HELP GUIDE THEM
THROUGH THE DARKNESS.





OTHERS WOULD STRIKE
OUT IN HATRED WITH
EVERY LAST BIT OF POWER
BEFORE SEARCHING FOR
ANOTHER MEANS TO
CONTROL AND INFLUENCE.

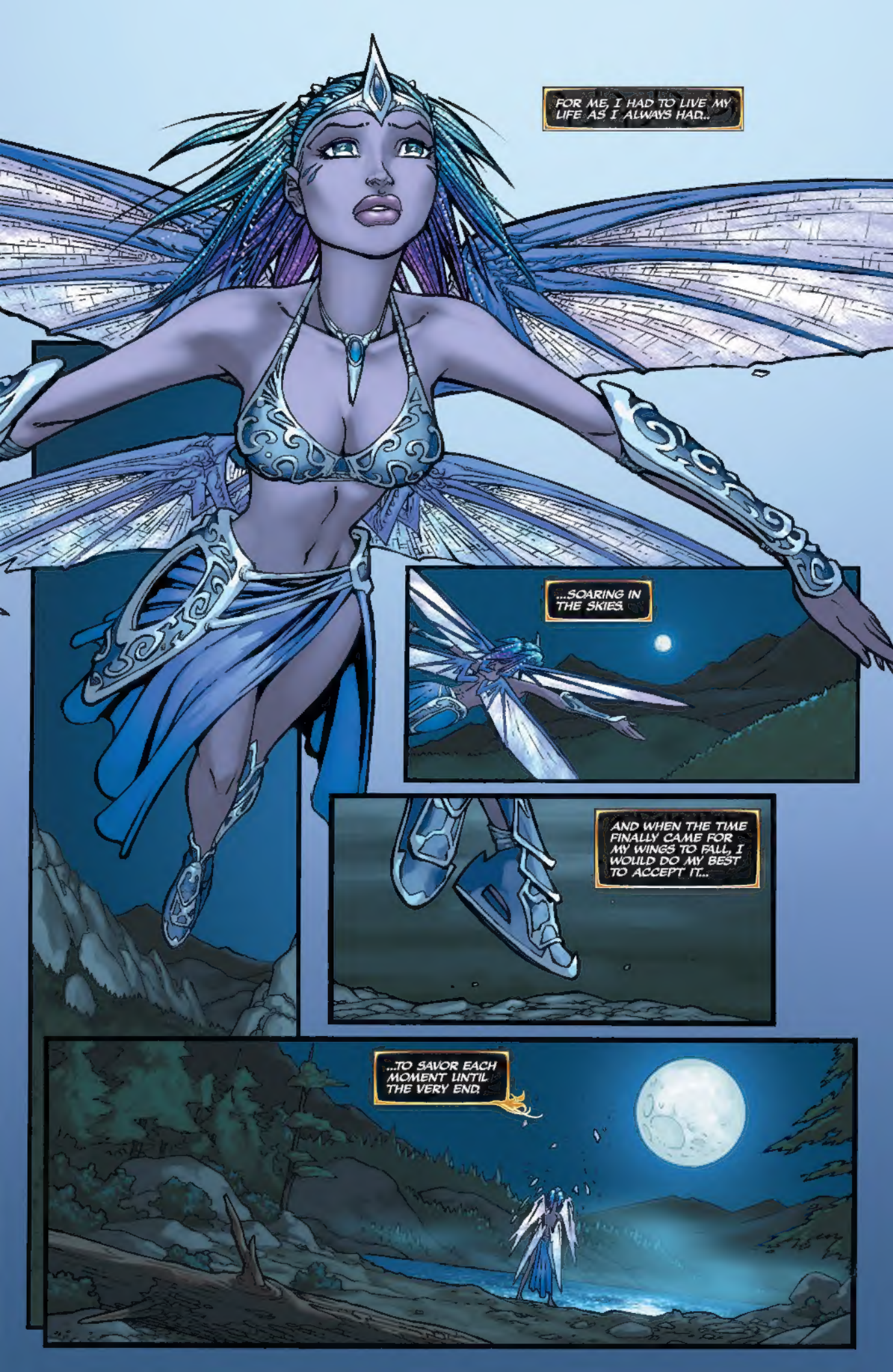


SOME WOULD SEEK TO
NURTURE THE MAGIC
THAT REMAINED...



...WHILE OTHERS
WOULD DEDICATE
THEMSELVES TO
KEEPING THE TRUTH
OF OUR WORLD SAFE...

...SECRET
AND SAFE.



FOR ME, I HAD TO LIVE MY
LIFE AS I ALWAYS HAD...



...SOARING IN
THE SKIES.



AND WHEN THE TIME
FINALLY CAME FOR
MY WINGS TO FALL, I
WOULD DO MY BEST
TO ACCEPT IT...



...TO SAVOR EACH
MOMENT UNTIL
THE VERY END.

